

IN THESE TIMES

Ponca City,
Oklahoma's
toxic tale

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PLANNING a PARTY





New York Gov. Mario Cuomo: global Keynesian.

Cuomo report warns of potential economic split

By John B. Judis

WASHINGTON

On the op-ed pages, at conventions here and at the Democratic platform hearings, a battle is raging for Gov. Michael Dukakis' political soul. The issue is not the Democratic platform, a document that will likely be ignored, nor even the message of the fall campaign, which will be shaped by the demographics of electoral strategy, but what Dukakis would do in January if he wins the presidency.

The latest attempt to influence a Dukakis presidency is the Cuomo Commission report, a 270-page document unveiled June 23 at a conference on "The First Hundred Days" of the next administration, sponsored by the Economic Policy Institute, a labor-supported think tank. New York Gov. Mario Cuomo instructed the commission, composed of top labor and business leaders, to assay the causes of the continuing American trade deficit.

The report is more significant for its disagreements on fiscal policy and Third World debt than for its agreement on aiding education and building new infrastructure. Intended to be a blueprint for the next president, it is a harbinger of conflict between labor and liberal intellectuals, on the one hand, and the party's powerful Wall Street wing on the other. It offers a glimpse at the kind of political battles that could paralyze rather than mobilize a Dukakis administration.

Raising or reducing demand: This year Democrats are advocating three conflicting economic strategies, all of which can be found within the Cuomo Commission

report. Many labor Democrats see the nation's trade deficit as the result of irresponsible or incompetent corporate management and cutthroat competition from Japan and from low-wage Third World countries. They want an industrial policy that will force management to invest productively at home and a trade policy that will prevent dumping in the U.S. and guarantee access to foreign markets. They don't think the economy suffers from an excess but from a shortage of consumer demand, particularly among the working class. They want a higher minimum wage and increased spending on education and infrastructure.

By contrast, Wall Street Democrats and many academic economists like Dukakis adviser Lawrence Summers blame the trade deficit on an excess of domestic consumer demand, which has resulted in growing demand for imports. They take the traditional position that the only way to reduce the trade deficit is to reduce consumer demand, whether through higher taxes or reduced government spending.

These Wall Streeters also see a finite trade-off between income that is used for consumption and income that is used for investment, and they blame American industrial decline on the country's low rate of savings. Thus, they favor new investment tax credits for business and urge reductions in entitlement programs and increases in consumer taxes through the imposition of a "value-added tax." (A value-added tax is imposed on goods when they are manufactured rather than when they are sold. The result is the same as a sales tax but is invisible to the public.) These measures, they argue, would provide industry with the capital it needs to compete as exporters, while reducing domestic demand for imports.

Some academics and liberal policymakers favor a third alternative called "global Keynesianism." The global Keynesians believe that the key to American economic revival is not to reduce consumption at home, but to increase it abroad, particularly in the Third World. They call for raising consumption by forgiving the massive Third World debt and by pressuring countries like South Korea to increase their wage rates. They reject blanket protectionism because it makes it more difficult for Third World countries like Brazil to pay off their debts. But they equally reject the Wall Street Democrats' program for reducing domestic consumption, which would not only further impoverish the Third World, but would also precipitate a dangerous recession in the U.S.

There are broad points of agreement among these three positions. For instance, all three Democratic approaches back increased spending on education and infrastructure and a freeze in military spending. They all think that foreign economic policy must now take priority over Cold War anti-communism. And both labor Democrats and global Keynesians support government industrial policy. But as became evident during the drafting of the Cuomo Commission report, the disagreements between the labor Democrats and global Keynesians, on the one hand, and the Wall Street Democrats, on the other, run extremely deep.

Eclectic approach: The staff who wrote memoranda for the commission and then drafted the final document reflected Cuomo's peculiar intellectual bent. It included two of the most prominent global Keynesians, Walter Russell Mead, author of *Moral Splendor*, and Jerry Sanders, co-author in *World Policy* of a recent two-part article titled "The Democrats and the New Grand Strategy." Cuomo had read and admired both men's work—indeed, Mead was hired after Cuomo circulated among his staff for their comments his own heavily marked-up copy of *Mortal Splendor*.

But Cuomo conceived of the commission as a representative body of top bankers, manufacturers and labor leaders. Its chairman was a corporate lawyer, Lewis B. Kaden, and it included Lewis Preston, chairman of Morgan Guaranty Trust, and Roger Altman, a former Carter Treasury official and now vice-chairman of Wall Street's Blackstone Group.

The global Keynesians on the staff found commission allies in labor leaders like Lynn Williams, the president of the United Steelworkers, and Jack Sheinkman, president of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers. They joined the staff in backing drastic Third World debt relief and a governmental industrial strategy. They also strongly

urged specific bilateral trade action to protect American markets from unfair competition and to force other governments to open their markets to American products.

But the staff and the labor leaders found their initiatives blocked by a "Morgan cabal" consisting of Preston, Altman, who is known as a "Morgan man," and Kaden, whose law firm represents Morgan Guaranty. Preston balked at any significant Third World debt relief and at government intervention in industry. Instead, he, Altman and other bankers insisted that the main danger faced by the U.S. was an excess of domestic consumption. These differences created ongoing conflict within the commission and resulted in a final report that borders on the incoherent.

Compromising positions: On one level, the report appears to represent a business-labor consensus for industrial policy, increased aid to education, greater worker participation in management, managed rather than free trade and Third World debt relief—the main planks in the left-wing Democratic economic platform. But the commission's support for these positions is contradicted or compromised by other positions or formulations.

The most detailed proposals in the report outline ways to manage world trade. The report calls for government exacting a quid pro quo from industries that it aids and for the U.S., using its own market as a "bargaining chip," to gain access to other markets. But according to staff members, labor leaders, backed by manufacturers like Allegheny Ludlum Chairman Richard Simmons, secured the bankers' support for managed trade and "positive government" by removing specific proposals for reducing Third World debt and by agreeing to include a proposal for a value-added tax.

Moreover, while the document's analysis reflects the staff's view that American exports are most threatened by

IN SIDE STORY

a lack of Third World demand, its fiscal proposals reflect the bankers' emphasis on reducing domestic consumption. "We must strive for a new balance [between consumption and savings] built on controlling consumption while increasing our output and the competitiveness of our products," the report states. "Policymakers have encouraged consumption but have not done enough to encourage savings."

As if to highlight the report's equivocal nature, the main participants issued statements afterward distancing themselves from its recommendations. Preston expressed his pleasure with the commission's proposal for a "consumption-based tax...that would provide welcome incentives for savings and investment," but rejects its call for a "significantly expanded government role in the economy." Robert Rubin of Goldman Sachs & Co. declared his preference for "less government involvement and a clearer adherence to free trade."

On the other side, Sheinkman dissented from the report's support for a value-added tax and from its "timid" proposals for Third World debt relief, while Williams rejected "any further cut in entitlement programs."

Even Cuomo distanced himself from the report. In his introduction he supports the global Keynesian argument for raising Third World consumption rather than reducing Americans' consumption and rejects the bankers' proposal for a value-added tax. Yet, "on the whole," Cuomo cautiously concluded, "the commission's program of reform is excellent."

The differences that muddled and strained the Cuomo Commission can also be found between supporters of Rev. Jesse Jackson and Dukakis supporters and within the Dukakis campaign itself, as well as between advocates of industrial policy like Robert Reich and Wall Street-oriented advisers like Lawrence Summers. For the moment, these arguments are expressed in little-read reports and abstract arguments. But if Dukakis wins in November, they could become the basis of class warfare. □

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By David Moberg

Labor unions plan to ride with a winner this election year

FOUR YEARS AGO ORGANIZED LABOR, DISPARAGED as a powerful "special interest," united behind a presidential candidate and ended up a loser. This year unions were unable to agree on a candidate and played a low-key role in the primaries. Yet labor issues were raised more effectively in the primaries this time, and—most important to many bruised labor leaders—unions may this year ride with a winner.

"We've lost four of the last five," AFL-CIO spokesman Rex Hardesty said. "We're not going to lose this one. There flows from this a pragmatism and accommodating attitude throughout the labor movement."

Unions also benefitted from most Democratic candidates' willingness—spurred by Jesse Jackson—to make labor themes integral to their campaigns. But that's partly because labor interests have coincided with revived populism and the cautious government activism of the leading Democratic contenders.

"When you look for the role labor is playing," said Geri Palast, director of politics and legislation for the Service Employees (SEIU), "labor is one set of actors in the party, but I don't think our agenda is different from anyone else's. Certainly child care, health care, health and safety, protecting the right to organize, worrying about AIDS and drugs—everybody is raising those issues."

Jackson's spotlight: Machinists union political director William Holayter thought labor interests had fared "not too bad with all the candidates. I'm not sure it's anything we did. Jackson being in there had a tremendous influence on other candidates. Jackson spotlighted a lot of our stuff himself."

In 1984 the AFL-CIO experimented with a policy of making a unified endorsement before the primaries. But the early endorsement of labor leaders' old friend Walter Mondale caused some grumbling from the members and gave Mondale rival Gary Hart a chance to attack Mondale for old-style politics of catering to "special interests," which ended up hurting labor's image.

Starting last summer, unions distributed literature and videos about all the candidates, and many polled their members. But no candidate gained clear support from either members or leaders. Jackson was always strong but had high negative ratings as well. Sen. Paul Simon and Rep. Richard Gephardt probably had as much labor support as Gov. Michael Dukakis did early on.

The AFL-CIO and other non-AFL labor groups, made no endorsement and bound individual leaders and their unions to that strategy. Although some of the most politically experienced unions chafed under the restrictions, many unions soon decided to maximize the number of union delegates for any candidate. Local or state union leaders did make endorsements, and some—like AFSCME—often endorsed both Dukakis and Jackson or simply tried to get their members on likely winning slates.

Overall, the strategy succeeded, with organized labor sending its largest bloc ever, roughly 1,000 delegates, or one-fourth of the convention. Union members make up 13 percent and union households 24 percent of registered Democrats, according to a *New York Times*/CBS survey. The National Education Association (NEA) leads the pack with



The AFL-CIO's Lane Kirkland pushed a short Democratic platform devoid of specifics.

257 delegates (down from 279 in 1984 and 311 in 1980, according to spokesman Howard Carroll). AFSCME with roughly 200 (nearly double its 1984 showing) and the Auto Workers (UAW) with 122 delegates and alternates (up about 20 percent from 1984) are next in line. The Jackson campaign claims nearly 300 of the labor delegates, and reports give Dukakis nearly 600.

The main labor goal now is to maintain unity and good feelings. Will there be a labor presence in Atlanta? "We hope not," Hardesty said. "We don't want any presence. We hope there's nothing but starting the fall campaign. But we want to be there just in case something comes up that would be divisive or bad politics, and to put the emphasis on our economic issues."

The AFL-CIO's Lane Kirkland and other union leaders were early and continuing supporters of Democratic Chairman Paul Kirk's drive for a short platform devoid of specifics. "Naturally we don't see our issues as a liability to the candidate," Hardesty said, but Kirkland wanted "to keep other groups out of there with issues that are more divisive than ours."

New pragmatism: Labor issues and representatives were spread throughout both the Dukakis and Jackson campaigns, and not treated separately, Palast said. "Will it be that we're infused throughout everything, and that's a good thing?" she mused about the general election. "Or will we not be noticed and that's bad? I think we'll transcend the 'special interest.'"

Some suspect that this new pragmatism is a cover for declining labor influence. "Everybody is talking how well labor did in this," one union staff person said. "To what

end, is my question. True, they won't be a special interest at this convention. They'll be a non-interest."

But eight years of Reagan may have lowered expectations. Unionists seem to hope that a Dukakis administration will at least listen to them, include them in decision-making, restore a modicum of government initiative and stop attacking unions.

The NEA's Carroll said that under Reagan "they're just peppering away at you and no-

"Labor has never asked to run the show," says one union leader. "It just wants to be at the table when decisions are made."

thing's being done. We're responding to looney tunes. With a Democratic administration we're not going to be in that situation. The expectations are not for sizable funding, but there's a mood setting, a tone, an attitude, and that will help on the state and local level. The difference is our voice will be heard."

"Labor's never asked to run the show," the Bricklayers political director Joan Baggett said. "It just wants to be at the table when decisions are made."

Dukakis' history and consensus style encourage unions to think they'll be included. "When we think about a Democratic president," Palast said, "we think about putting a stop to [government hostility], then turning

it around. We're not expecting to go from Ronald Reagan to everything Jesse Jackson believes in one day."

The tail and the dog: A relatively small change like new appointments to the National Labor Relations Board "is enough to make a tremendous difference for the American labor movement," said Hardesty. But labor doesn't expect a Democratic administration to reverse its slide. "These are changes that must be done by us now on our own initiative," he said. "Winning elections and getting changes is the tail. The dog is major changes of our own. Institutional vigor comes first. If you had a magic wand and rewrote national labor law and nobody filed a petition to represent any workers, it wouldn't do any good. Mood and mandate are most important."

For the moment, however, winning is most important, and it seems there is a labor consensus that the best course for Dukakis is a vague appeal on reversing Reaganomics and making government responsive again. The stronger Jackson message had significant labor appeal; even in the late New Jersey and California primaries 40 percent of union households favored Jackson.

But among some union segments, such as the Bricklayers, Jackson's picket-line witness for labor may have warmed hearts slightly, but negative reactions remained around the 90 percent level. "Our members liked the idea of creating jobs more than walking a picket line with them," Baggett said. Dukakis had overwhelming support on that point from Massachusetts Bricklayers leaders.

Indeed, in the fall Bay State Bricklayers will mount a national phone bank for fellow union members. The Service Employees, whose first big venture into presidential politics was a great success, will concentrate on California, a key state where they are the strongest union. Although to date some unions are not as mobilized as in past years, most seem excited about the prospect of victory and will launch intensive campaign efforts. In the lean Reagan years, Palast argued, some unions discovered they could only exercise influence by mobilizing their members, not by making a phone call across town. That may help this fall.

Although the non-endorsement strategy had its pitfalls, many union political organizers are pleased with the results, not just in the number of delegates but in the grass-roots enthusiasm engendered in their unions. "More of our people participated," argued AFSCME assistant political action director Earl O'Neal. "This way was best of all ways we've done before. It gave people a choice. We weren't pressing them. Some people say the AFL should still stay in charge. But when you say people have to do something, they don't participate the same way."

Ironically, the populist message from the candidates and the grass-roots political vigor tapped inadvertently by lack of consensus at the top may prove to be as much of a long-term benefit to unions as the much-desired victory by their candidate. □

IN SHORT

By Joel Bleifuss

Enemies list

This fall Environmental Action will once again exhibit a political savvy and clout that is sadly lacking in many well-intentioned liberal-left organizations. The Washington-based group is now accepting nominations for the "Dirty Dozen," the 12 senators and representatives up for re-election who have done the most to damage the environment. "Becoming one of Environmental Action's Dirty Dozen is no small accomplishment," the group's political action committee director Sandra Ledbetter tells *In These Times*. "To qualify a representative must display a complete and total lack of concern for the environment." It is also no small problem for those chosen. Environmental Action will target the 12 ("We keep it pure, no second stringers," says Ledbetter) for defeat in November's elections by saturating their districts with press releases and hard-hitting radio ads. Since the group's legislative cleanup program began in 1970, more than half of those Congress members targeted have gone down in defeat. To place your nomination, write: "Dirty Dozen," EnPAC, 1525 New Hampshire Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20036.

Shades of the Pentagon

Arguably, the environment's No. 1 enemy is the Reagan administration's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). A document obtained by the Citizens Clearinghouse for Hazardous Waste (CCHW) and released to *In These Times* indicates that the agency has let those companies that it caught violating the Clean Water Act off very lightly. The EPA document is a chart titled "All clean water cases concluded with penalty in FY 87." It shows that of the 70 companies and municipalities penalized in 1987, 11 paid the required fine, five paid a significant portion of the required fine and 54 paid \$1. The fines on those companies and municipalities that paid \$1 total \$5,430,191. One company, Modine Manufacturing Company, which violated the Clean Water Act eight times, paid only \$8 of its \$1,083,500 in fines. Will Collette, CCHW's national organizing director, describes the scandal as a "going-out-of-business sale for the Reagan EPA." Says Collette, "Under the law the EPA is responsible for maintaining clean water, but the record is clear: 80 percent of the water polluters in 1987 didn't even get a slap on the wrist. They agency assesses six-figure fines against Fortune 500 companies [Reynolds Aluminum, International Paper, Coca-Cola, General Electric, Bethlehem Steel and Revlon], gets itself nice headlines in the newspaper for being tough on polluters, and then gives away the ranch by letting these fat cats off with \$1 fines."

Climate conference

Parched farmlands spell economic ruin for Midwestern farmers. The Mississippi is a trickle of its mighty past. Skin cancer is shaping up as a major environmental disease. Some say these are signs of a coming ecological catastrophe. But what is the Reagan administration doing? Making sure that our children will indict it for crimes against the 21st century. Last week the Reagan administration cancelled EPA administrator Lee Thomas' appearance at the World Conference on Changing Atmosphere. The Toronto conference, which was jointly convened by the United Nations Environment Program, the World Meteorological Association and the government of Canada, discussed how international cooperation might address the dangers of air pollution, the depletion of the ozone layer, deforestation and the greenhouse effect. The *Boston Globe's* Diane Dumanoski reports, "U.N. and Canadian officials and U.S. environmentalists [attribute] the U.S. absence to disagreement within the Reagan administration on the issue and a resulting unwillingness to attend a meeting that may call for an international treaty to reduce the pollution responsible for the so-called greenhouse effect."

Independent Soviet groups seek ties to U.S.

In this era of *glasnost*, Moscow and Leningrad have become home to 93 independent political organizations and clubs with a combined membership of about 10,000, according to a survey by Alex Amerisov, editor of the *Soviet-American Review* and *In These Times* columnist, and SMOT (Independent Interprofessional Trade Union of the Working People), a Moscow-based organization dedicated to creating an independent trade-union movement in the USSR. Of these 93 groups, 21 are officially registered with the



Gay AIDS activist group supports testing

SAN FRANCISCO—As the short history of the AIDS epidemic has clearly demonstrated, the unrestricted use of the HIV antibody screening test can threaten an individual's privacy, political rights and financial well-being. The nasty economic and social fallout of a positive antibody status—loss of friends, housing, employment and, with employment, the all-important health insurance—has led gay-activist groups to oppose antibody testing. So, why is Project Inform, one of the U.S.' largest and most influential gay AIDS activist groups, now urging its subscribers and hot-line callers to take the HIV antibody test?

Project Inform announced its change of heart last December in the group's newsletter, *PI* [Project Inform] *Perspective*, stating that voluntary, anonymous HIV antibody testing "is the single most important step people can take to stop the loss of life in our community."

The San Francisco-based group collects and assesses information about treatments' safety, efficacy and availability.

Though more aggressive in pursuing and supporting early treatment than other AIDS activists, prior to the December manifesto Inform founders Martin Delaney and Joe Brewer, like most gay AIDS activists, were skeptical of the HIV antibody test's usefulness and had thus rejected testing.

But the HIV antibody test's record

as a marker only of oppression was altered in 1987 when epidemiologic studies of gay men in San Francisco demonstrated that six years after infection, 75 percent of HIV antibody-positive subjects had developed either AIDS or ARC (AIDS-related complex).

At the same time these studies were released, there were new reasons to believe that life after infection was not an immediate plunge downward toward death. Clinical testing and community experience suggested that a combination of preventive and therapeutic approaches to HIV infection were significantly prolonging people's lives. Aerosolized pentamidine, a prophylactic treatment for pneumocystis carinii pneumonia (PCP), the disease currently causing 57 percent of AIDS deaths, has produced promising results, seemingly preventing or diminishing episodes of PCP in people who inhale it. Several anti-retroviral agents—AZT, acyclovir and dextran sulfate—appear to have some effectiveness alone or in combination. And various immune-system boosters and non-FDA approved retroviral agents—AL-721, amplitgen, ribavirin, isoprinosine—also look promising.

But treatment is possible only when people know they are infected—and currently, the only inexpensive and readily available index of infection is the HIV antibody test. Based on the San Francisco epidemiologic studies, it now appears that the average incubation between infection and immune exhaustion (that is AIDS or severe ARC) is about 8.5 years. That is a lot of time in

which to explore several early treatment options—retarding viral replication, boosting the immune system and preventing opportunistic infections.

It was these factors that prompted Project Inform's directors to urge community members to seek HIV antibody testing. According to Project Inform development director George Greer, the organization was steeled for community outrage at its new position. Instead, there have been many positive reactions and the group's position has since been seconded by the National Mobilization Against AIDS.

The National Association of People With AIDS (NAPWA) in Washington, D.C., however, is not so quick to endorse the policy. Says NAPWA Assistant Director Paula Jones, "We would tend to waffle a little bit more on testing. It is an individual decision. There are advantages to being tested and knowing your antibody status, and there are disadvantages that could result in discrimination, loss of job, loss of housing, especially in areas where anti-discrimination laws have not been passed."

But Project Inform stands by its policy: "Arguments against testing are either political or psychological responses to a medical problem. These should be answered in the political and psychological realms. What's too often overlooked is the need to make a medical response to the medical problem. How many more must die or cross the line to full-blown AIDS while we argue about the politics and stress of testing?"

—J.Z. Grover

Jonas Savimbi receives the Medgar Evers Humanitarian Award

FAYETTE, MISS.—About 60 demonstrators confronted Jonas Savimbi, leader of the Angolan rebel group UNITA, on June 18 as he toured three Mississippi towns on the invitation

of Fayette, Miss., Mayor Charles Evers.

Evers, brother of the slain civil rights leader Medgar Evers, had chosen Savimbi to be this year's recipient of the Medgar Evers Humanitarian Award. Explaining his selection of Savimbi, Evers said, "We black Mississippians fought our battles and overcame. Dr. Savimbi is fighting against 47,000 Cubans. He's fighting for democracy."

But Myrlie Evers, widow of the late civil rights leader, chastised Savimbi

for his alliance with the South African government and publicly encouraged Mississippians to protest her brother-in-law's award ceremony. "I am opposed firmly to Jonas Savimbi receiving an award—particularly a humanitarian award that bears my late husband's name," she said. "Medgar was a freedom fighter and a pioneer who gave his life so that all people could live and work together. I hope there are enough freedom loving people in Mississippi of both colors who would not accept

Experts Agree: MEESE IS a PIG

Kim Arrington/Washington Post

Justice squeals: The Secret Service Uniformed Division and the FBI were apparently detailed by someone to track down the artists responsible for the "Experts Agree: Meese Is a Pig" posters that have been plastered around the D.C. area. The resulting drag-net caught four "straight edge" punks (a variety opposed to drug use, sex and violence) in the act of waging what they term a "guerilla poster war." One young man was nabbed by the Secret Service with a bucket of wheat paste, paint rollers and posters in his car. An FBI spokeswoman would neither confirm nor deny the investigation. And spokeswomen for the Justice Department and the Secret Service said they were unaware of any investigation. In a pig's eye.

SCLC members distributed a statement from prominent black leaders, including Jesse Jackson, criticizing UNITA's ties with the South African government.

When Savimbi was questioned repeatedly about UNITA's connections to the government of South Africa, he downplayed the significance of South Africa's involvement in UNITA's military longevity. "Sometimes you have to accept something you do not believe in," he said. "We only use their transit facilities."

But in the past, Savimbi has openly expressed support for the Botha regime. In a 1986 interview on *60 Minutes*, Savimbi registered his support for Botha, saying, "I can see the executive president of South Africa as my friend."

UNITA has been accused of gross human rights violations. In March 1987, the *Washington Post* printed eyewitness accounts of a January 1987 massacre of 133 civilians in Huambo Province by UNITA forces.

Savimbi, however, defended his UNITA forces against such charges. "We don't kill babies, women or civilians," he said. "We fight Castro's troops."

And if anyone has any doubts, Mayor Evers, rising to Savimbi's defense, explained, "In war you kill whoever is in the way. If children are a part of the other side and if they are in the way and a bomb falls, they die."
—Anna Sochocky

state, 62 are seeking registration and 10 oppose registration. In the same vein, 30 of the organizations support the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), 41 support Gorbachov's policy of *perestroika* and 22 are neutral or indifferent toward the CPSU. Defined according to their ideological perspective, 30 can be described as Marxist or democratic-socialist, 18 as liberal-democratic, 18 as non-ideological, 15 as ecological, seven as pacifist, four as Christian and one as anarchist. Many of these groups are interested in building grass-roots ties with their counterparts in the U.S. Amerisov and SMOT have prepared a 34-page directory that describes each organization and includes the name and telephone number of a contact person in the Soviet Union. The directory can be ordered for \$10 prepaid from Soviet-American Review, 1300 W. Belmont, Chicago, IL 60657.

Business as usual in Haiti

The military coup d'etat that put Haitian Gen. Henri Namphy back into the National Palace June 20 brought out into the open what most Haitians already knew: the army controls Haiti, and will use violence to quell any challenges to its rule-by-force. Anne-christine d'Adesky reports that compared to the international outrage that followed the army's usurping of Haiti's first democratic elections last November, Namphy's ouster of civilian Leslie F. Manigat drew only a tepid "I-told-you-so" response from the populace. "This coup was an internal military struggle. We Haitians were merely observers," said opposition activist Bobby Duval. "It has nothing to do with democracy."

UAW challenger claims victory

Jerry Tucker appears to have won the first round of union elections in his bid to become director of the United Auto Workers' St. Louis-based, south-central region (see *In These Times*, June 22). Tucker, the former assistant regional director, was a victim of election fraud in his narrow loss to incumbent director Ken Worley in 1986. David Moberg reports that in a court-ordered rerun of the delegate election, Tucker claims to be 52 votes ahead of Worley out of a total of about 690 votes. The actual election of a new director will occur at a convention of these new delegates on August 11 in Tulsa.

A bug here, a bug there

After an 18-month study of the Defense Department's germ and chemical warfare research program, a Senate subcommittee has found that there are "serious deficiencies in...[the] management of safety issues [involving] many of the most dangerous substances known [to man]." The subcommittee on oversight of government management found that the problems plaguing governmental and private research facilities include "inadequate regulations, lax safety enforcement and documented safety lapses." The Senate report concluded that under present circumstances public safety cannot be assured. For example, at the Army's Fort Detrick laboratory in Maryland employees have "misplaced" and "spilled" vials of deadly germs.

Mail bombs

Postmaster General Anthony Frank announced last month that the Postal Service will no longer permit the Army to send deadly experimental biological agents through the U.S. mail. The Army has been regularly mailing 50 or so deadly toxins, including mutant microbes and viruses, from its laboratory in Fort Detrick, Md.—often by unregistered mail. The Postal Service ban is a response to a Pentagon plan to increase U.S. shipments of infectious viruses upon completion of the Dugway Proving Grounds in Utah, the Army's biological warfare research laboratory. The viruses involved include anthrax, botulism, Q fever and dengue fever. According to Jeremy Rifkin, of the Washington-based Foundation on Economic Trends, "The Department of Defense is shipping the deadliest diseases known to man without taking any substantial precautions.... If released by accident or through terrorism, these pathogens could cause damage equivalent to that of a nuclear meltdown." Representatives of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) have told Congress that although the CDC makes the regulations governing the transport of dangerous biological substances, it does not enforce them. The CDC further reported that leaks have been discovered in about 5 percent of the biological agents shipped each year. The Department of Defense is expected to comply with the Postal Service ban. All future shipments are likely to be sent via United Parcel Service or Federal Express.

this happening."

In Jackson, demonstrators chanting "Savimbi, Botha, you can't hide, you are charged with genocide," forced an hour-long delay of the scheduled press conference. Local police ordered the group to leave Sun-N-Sand Hotel, which they did peacefully.

Once outside, the protesters clashed with 10 black members of the Jesus Christ Baptist Church of Ocean Springs. Said one church member, "I'm against communism in all forms. I'm against the African National Congress. The main issue is heaven and hell."

Animal rights advocates target needless torture

"Congress has received more mail on the subject of animal research than on any other topic," said a recent *Newsweek* report. The mail runs 100 to one against the use of animals for research. This awakening of public sensibility toward the cruelty daily perpetrated against animals in the nation's laboratories can be credited to the increased activity of the animal liberation movement.

Each year in the U.S. millions of animals suffer needless torture to test the toxicity of household and cosmetic products. No one knows how many animals are used in these tests, since companies are only required to report data on those species of animals covered by the Federal Animal Welfare Act—dogs, cats, rabbits, hamsters, guinea pigs and primates. But one animal rights organization, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, estimates that some 14 million animals are used annually in toxicity tests in the U.S.; most of these are rats and mice—species not protected by the Animal Welfare Act.

Animal rights groups have targeted two of the main product tests—the Draize eye irritancy test and the LD50 test. The Draize test is used to determine the degree of eye damage caused by the product being tested. Each year some 100,000 albino rabbits, immobilized in stocks, undergo

Protest leader Rev. Randall Osborne of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), dismissed the pro-Savimbi group. "There are fringe elements in every community," he said. "They are in the smallest minority. Some are misguided. Some are on people's payroll."

Hollis Watkins, a former leader of the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee, denounced Savimbi, saying, "He's fighting an unjust war. He's hiding some facts. He's using the argument against communists—the same argument our white oppressors used against us."

the Draize test. Some scientists have called the Draize test crude, subjective and of questionable relevance to human beings. The LD50 toxicity test (Lethal Dose 50 percent) is used to measure the toxicity of products by determining the amount of a product that must be fed to a group of animals in order to cause half of them to die. A three-year study of alternatives to animal testing by 20 Swiss scientists was released this year. The study concluded that the LD50 test could readily be replaced by other tests, using far fewer or no animals.

The stumbling block in efforts to end these tests is that alternative tests that do not use animals have yet to be accepted in the scientific community. Two industry groups, the Soap and Detergent Association and the Cosmetic, Toiletry and Fragrance Association, have begun their own studies in response to ongoing pressure from activist groups. The cosmetic and household product industries respond to criticism by

pointing out their contributions to the Center for Alternatives to Animal Testing at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore or to similar centers at other institutions. While donations are certainly a step in the right direction, many animal rights activists think they don't go far enough. These contributions represent a fraction of corporate budgets and seem to be most useful as a public relations gambit.

Industry representatives say that the major impediment to widespread use of human alternatives is sluggishness on the part of federal agencies to develop standards for validation of new tests. The agencies responsible for toxicity testing regulations—the Food and Drug Administration, the Department of Transportation and the Consumer Product Safety Commission—haven't set clear standards for judging the validity of non-animal tests. New regulations are mired in a bureaucratic swamp of task forces, committees and study groups that can't agree on a standardized list of acceptable non-animal alternative tests.

Last year Rep. Barbara Boxer (D-CA) introduced the Consumer Products Safe Testing Act to remedy this problem. The bill, which has not been passed, would prohibit federal agencies from using LD50 results to determine product safety. It also would require them to review other animal toxicity tests and replace them with non-animal alternatives if valid ones exist.

—Leslie Pardue and Reto Pieth



By Ruben Martinez

LOS ANGELES

IT'S STRATEGY TIME, AND LATINO—OR "HISPANIC," in establishment politico code—elected officials and activists are gearing up to influence the outcome of November's elections. Experts say that Latino voters may make their strongest showing to date at the polls. And they believe that the Latino bloc could play a pivotal role in determining the election's outcome.

According to the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO), the actual Latino vote increased by 29.3 percent between 1982 and 1986. This represents a rise from 2.6 to 3.6 percent of the total national vote. To some, this number might seem like a drop in the electoral bucket. Yet considering that 85 percent of Latinos in the U.S. live in only nine states—California, Texas, New York, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, New Mexico, Arizona and Colorado—the potential for a Latino "swing" vote is high. These states represent 193 of the 270 electoral college votes (71 percent) needed for a presidential victory in November.

For example, a 3.4 percent shift in the Latino vote in Texas would shift the statewide vote by a full percentage point, and possibly provide the deciding vote in the event of a close election.

Something for everyone: The hallmark of the Latino voting bloc is its heterogeneity. It includes, among others, arch right-wing Cuban Americans, grass-roots, left-wing Chicanos, middle-of-the-road politicians and progressive union leaders. Nevertheless, there have been intense efforts recently to galvanize the Latino vote around common interests. "Hispanic agendas" have proliferated since the presidential campaign kicked off last year.

Such diverse and key Latino groups as the Midwest Voter Registration Project, the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), the National Hispanic Agenda '88 Unity Task Force and the National Hispanic Leadership Conference have all produced documents promoting the theme of unity among Latino voters. San Antonio Mayor Henry Cisneros kicked off the agenda campaign last October when he organized the National Unity Task Force, an effort at building an agenda whose stated goal was to underscore the fact that "Hispanic issues are America's issues."

The Unity Task Force conference, held in Washington, D.C., focused on bringing together politicians and those community organizations with a national scope. The document produced by the conference includes discussions of immigration, bilingual education, political empowerment, civil rights, business growth, social services, housing and health-care issues. Yet the document is short on specifics and is rife with watered-down statements. In some cases agenda priorities and the wording of the document were manipulated by the extreme right, leaving many liberals dissatisfied.

The final document calls for increasing Defense Department contracts for Latino businesses and includes a statement on Latin American policy that reads like a State Department press release: "We must be vocal against all dictatorships, whether of the left or right. We support a peace process as an initial step toward a solution of the present crisis in Central America."

Says Roberto Maestas of the Centro de la

Great expectations for Latino poll power

Raza, a Seattle-based community organization, "We got shouted out and out-voted. [Cisneros] tried to find common ground with the more progressive elements, [but] he yielded and gave more concessions to the Cuban, right-wing element."

Adds Andy Hernandez of the Southwest

HISPANICS

Voter Registration Project, "That's not the way you challenge the [Democratic] party. You don't ask them to be apple pie and motherhood—you ask them for specific things."

Cisneros produced an agenda that reflects the views of established Latino politicians rather than those of community organizers. Midwest Voter Registration Project Director Juan Andrade says that his organization's agenda-making methodology was "diametrically opposed" to Cisneros' project. "We had people from 20 states across the country, largely those whose input would otherwise have been excluded," says Andrade.

The Unity Task Force document prompted a number of Latino organizations to develop their own agendas, most of which were well represented at the National Hispanic Leadership Conference (NHLC) held last April in Washington, D.C.

"Unlike the others, we truly brought the community together," says NHLC Chairman Pablo Sedillo of the U.S. Catholic Conference. Generally, the NHLC document supports Sedillo's claim. Highlighted are topics missed by some of the other efforts—such as criminal justice (Latinos are consistently discriminated against within the penal system and have little or no recourse to assis-

tance), culture (more monies for Latino arts) as well as sections on religion (pressure organized religion to pay more attention to Latino needs) and media (underrepresentation of Latinos in media employment and negative stereotyping).

For Harry Pachon, national director of NALEO, the overall agenda-making process signals a "political maturation in the community. Clearly, [the NHLC] is going to want to have an impact at the [party] conventions."

The dividing line: Yet not everyone participated in nor saw the NHLC project as a worthy endeavor. Many community-based organizations opted to concentrate on organizing in Latino barrios throughout the U.S., hoping to insure both voter participation as well as ideological coherency.

Indeed, the clearest division found among Latinos this election year is the rift between the "establishment" politicians and the community-based activists. Although both of these groups grew out of the Chicano/Latino explosion of the '60s, the distance between the two has grown steadily. The majority of Latino establishment politicians lined up early behind Gov. Michael Dukakis rather than swing to the left of the party, which was represented by Jesse Jackson.

A universal theme is political empowerment, increased representation and growing influence on shaping the party platform.

This raised the question of who was leading whom: Was the democratic-majority constituency really behind Dukakis from the beginning? Or was there a "vanguard" effect, in which constituencies were mobilized for Dukakis by their elected representatives? Although Dukakis won a majority of the Latino primary vote, he didn't monopolize it. Jackson won pluralities in key cities such as Chicago, Philadelphia and New York City, according to various exit polls. It's impossible to say whether or not Jackson would have fared better in California, New Mexico or Texas if more Latino politicians had endorsed him.

Some observers claim the Dukakis and Jackson platforms aren't that far apart. But there is no doubt that the civil-rights substance and symbolism of Jackson's campaign, as well as his voter-empowerment legacy—which is essential to both the Latino and black communities—made him the candidate who best reflected Latinos' interests.

So why did so many Latino politicians support Dukakis? The answer is simple, according to Roberto Rodriguez, editor of the Latino national monthly *Americas 2001*. "Activists vote on their principles and the establishment politicians vote pragmatically. Politicians are lining themselves up for [Dukakis administration] cabinet jobs," he says.

Other Latinos, however, downplay the significance of this apparent division and point to the possibility for Latino unity as symbolized by the agenda process.

Bea Molina, president of the Mexican American Political Association, doesn't think that the grass-roots/establishment split will matter much come November. "If Jackson were to have won, there'd be a lot of Latinos supporting him. Now that Dukakis has won, the support will still be there," says Molina.

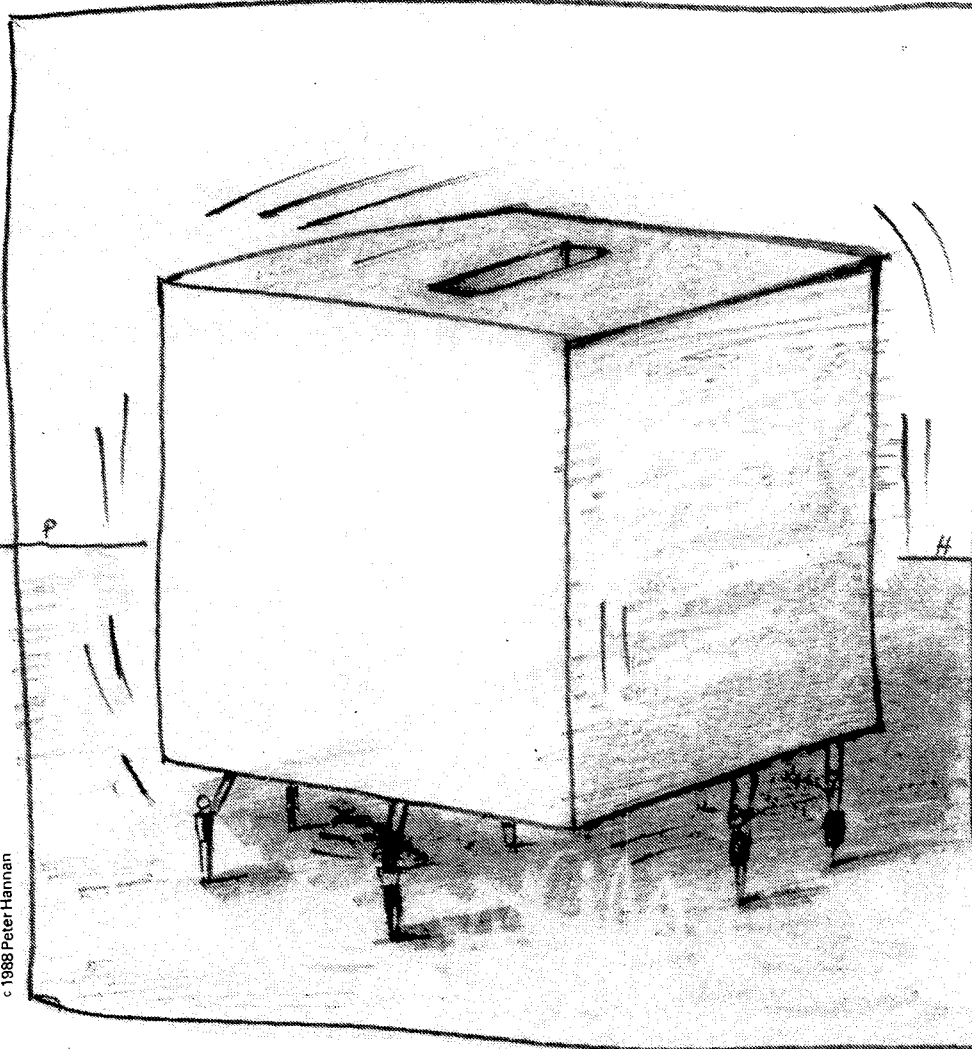
In addition, many Latino vote-watchers say that those Latino Democrats who swung right for Reagan—some of them middle or upper-middle class, but many of them lower-middle class—are returning to the Democratic Party.

Conventional expectations: It's easy to predict what will happen at the Republican convention: the Latino right wing will fall in line with tried and true colors, enthusiastically supporting such positions as increased military spending and renewed contra aid. But things will be more interesting for the Democrats in Atlanta. A universal theme of the recent Latino agendas is political empowerment through voter registration, increased representation on governmental boards and growing influence in shaping the Democratic Party platform. Specifically, many Latino elected officials are pushing for an increased proportion of Latino delegates at the convention.

Yet by late June this goal was far from being attained, while Republican figures weren't available. And, according to the Democratic National Committee, Hispanic delegates totalled only about 5 percent. But Dr. Leo Estrada, an expert in Latino demographics who is tracking convention delegates for the Southwest Voter Registration Project, believes those numbers will probably double by convention time.

"It's not a lot," admits Estrada, "but if we can keep people together behind certain planks, we can make an important contribution."

Ruben Martinez is Latino affairs editor of the *L.A. Weekly*.



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By Salim Muwakkil

TAWANA BRAWLEY'S PERPLEXING TALE OF abduction and rape, and the tactics used by her controversial trio of legal advisers, has stoked the flaring embers of racial tensions in the New York metropolitan area and sharpened divisions among the area's black leadership. More importantly—and amazingly—the issues surrounding the case have attained such national political momentum that the specifics of the black teen-ager's charges of kidnapping and sexual abuse have almost become irrelevant.

Like the Bernhard Goetz and Howard Beach incidents, two other cases that have sharpened racial antagonisms, the Brawley saga treads heavily on the minefield where race and justice intersect. And that's not all they have in common; at least one of Brawley's three advisers also has links to those other cases. In those cases and others, the advisers—attorneys C. Vernon Mason and Alton Maddox Jr. and Rev. Al Sharpton—have attempted to expand the discussion beyond the legal particulars to a broader condemnation of racism in the criminal justice system.

Her story: Tawana Brawley was 15 years old last November when Dutchess County sheriff's deputies in Wappingers Falls, N.Y., found her disoriented and traumatized inside a plastic bag. Her hair was matted and crudely sheared, she was bruised, smeared with dog feces and racial slurs were scrawled on her body. The black teen-ager charged that she was abducted by two white men—one of whom flashed a badge of some kind—and taken to an isolated wooded area where her kidnappers were joined by others, all of whom sexually assaulted her throughout the four days she was allegedly held captive.

Glenda Brawley, the girl's mother, said her daughter initially cooperated with Dutchess County officials. "The first week my daughter answered all the questions for the people here," Brawley said. "But then I saw that everything we said was being distorted and changed around."

Some officials admit they performed sloppy police work during the initial phase of the case and there are solid indications they downplayed the incident. And since the case had received little but local attention, Brawley said she feared being railroaded and isolated by an all-white criminal justice system.

Those fears led her to Maddox and Mason, who are both noted for employing public protest against racism as a legal tactic. Maddox immediately charged Wappingers Falls officials with a lack of diligence in apprehending suspects and hinted that they may be attempting to cover up the involvement of several local white men. He later leveled specific charges against three men he said were identified by the victimized teen-ager.

Howard Beach success: Both Maddox and Mason had gained fame as attorneys in the infamous Howard Beach case, in which 11 white teen-agers were charged with attacking three black men and chasing one onto a highway where he was struck and killed by a car. The two attorneys had argued aggressively that local law enforcement officials were disinclined to aggressively prosecute the white assailants and they advised the surviving Howard Beach victims not to cooperate with those officials until a special prosecutor was named to the case. Meanwhile, Rev. Sharpton, a 31-year-old former

RACE RELATIONS



The tale of Tawana Brawley (second from right): is it a hoax or a classic case of racial injustice?

Who's using whom in Tawana Brawley case?

child evangelist, flamboyant self-promoter and excellent organizer, began staging a series of protest marches in support of the victims.

Their strategy was effective; New York Gov. Mario Cuomo named a special prosecutor, and three of the four white teen-agers facing the most serious charges were convicted of manslaughter. Seven more face trials on lesser charges stemming from the incident. The trio's success silenced critics who had questioned their unorthodox methods.

"After Howard Beach, it appeared that Maddox and Mason had finally hit upon a tactic that could make a change in this racist criminal justice system," says Rev. Herbert Daughtry, former chairman of the National Black United Front and an influential voice among New York's more militant black leadership. "Their triumphs sparked a lot of enthusiasm, and we began to see the awakening of a new, New York-based black movement," he adds, noting that much larger crowds began turning out for various demonstrations protesting the racism within the criminal justice system.

The Brawley case intensified calls for an overhaul of that system, and many angry black New Yorkers travelled to the Dutchess County seat in Poughkeepsie, N.Y., 50 miles north of the city, to participate in a protest march demanding such a change. Several events cast further suspicion on Dutchess County law enforcement officials, including the suicide of one man with a circumstantial relationship to the case. Several celebrities, including Bill Cosby and boxing champion Mike Tyson, pledged \$125,000 to help solve the crime.

Sharpton joined Mason and Maddox as advisers of the Brawley family and, just as in the Howard Beach case, they counselled the victim not to cooperate with local law enforcement officials. In fact, such a tactic seemed even more appropriate in the Braw-

ley case; the teen-ager alleged a police officer was among those who abducted her. When Gov. Cuomo again agreed to appoint a special prosecutor, Maddox, Mason and Sharpton once more were showered with kudos. Cuomo's appointment of State Attorney General Robert Abrams to prosecute the case was originally welcomed but later rejected by the trio as inadequate, and they urged their clients to withhold cooperation.

Kinks in the story: Meanwhile, the teen-ager's story has been greeted with increasing suspicion and skepticism. Several publications have provided exhaustive investigative accounts of the case, most of which cast doubt on many of Brawley's claims. Medical tests found no injuries or evidence of sexual activity and the FBI discovered no evidence

The teen-ager's story has been greeted with increasing suspicion and skepticism.

whatsoever to corroborate her story. That federal agency eventually dropped out of the case.

Roy Innis, the executive director of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and a leading black conservative, also contracted an independent investigation into the incident. Innis, who also took a position in opposition to Maddox, Mason and Sharpton in the Bernhard Goetz case—in which Innis championed the white electrician's right to shoot four black youths he thought meant him harm—says his investigator, former New York City police detective Galen Kelly, has concluded that Brawley's account is false. Kelly himself has hinted that he found some evidence linking Brawley to drug use and prostitution.

A power grab? Innis characterizes the

Brawley family's trio of advisers as "the three stooges" and accuses them of committing "civil fraud and wrong parading under civil rights." He says their real intent is "a power grab for the leadership of grass-roots black groups in New York City."

And that assessment is shared by Innis' ideological opposites. In fact, the turmoil surrounding the Brawley case is being credited with dividing the leadership of New York's incipient black movement. "The activist community is deeply divided and disappointed by what's happening in the Brawley case," explains Jitu Weusi, a Brooklyn community leader. Weusi helped organize the "December 12 Coalition," the group that first conducted protest of Brawley's treatment.

"The essence of the dispute is the question of Sharpton's involvement and leadership," Weusi adds. "Ever since it was revealed that he was wearing a wire for the government, a significant portion of the nationalist leadership—me, Sonny Carson, Viola Plummer, Elombe Brath and others—agreed to stop working with him until things were cleared up." Earlier this year, *Newsday* revealed that Sharpton had cooperated with law enforcement agencies seeking information on drug sales by wearing a bugging device to tape conversations with some of his associates.

The defection of these well-respected organizers was particularly damaging to the trio's credibility. While they could accuse black politicians and more mainstream leadership of being pawns of a racist system, or "rent-a-toms," such charges carry little weight when applied to leaders with impeccable movement credentials like Weusi, Plummer, Carson and Brath.

Weusi says they still feel Brawley was a victim of some kind, and that justice for her is the prime objective. "But we don't think the objective of justice can be achieved with Sharpton calling the shots."

A way out: Daughtry, who is executive director of the United African-American Churches, notes that his group had decided to stay with Sharpton, Maddox and Mason, even after Sharpton's wire revelation. "In early March we urged them to cooperate with Abrams," he reveals. "We told them to make a statement that they're doing it at our urging. That way, we figured, they'd have nothing to lose. If the investigation came up blank, they could blame us, a bunch of idealistic clergymen. And if it turned up a high-level conspiracy, they could then get the credit. But they turned it down."

Maddox, Mason and Sharpton are still urging the Brawleys to withhold cooperation. They've provided Glenda Brawley with sanctuary in a Brooklyn church after counselling her to defy a grand jury subpoena to testify in the case. In an unusual public letter of advice to Attorney General Abrams, Gov. Cuomo urged him to arrest the girl's mother. "The process of the court, already outstanding," Cuomo wrote, "should be enforced."

Daughtry says that after suspending judgment for quite a while he, too, is starting to question the motives of the Brawleys' advisers. "I'm beginning to wonder if they have justice for Tawana as their first priority," he says. In recent weeks, two former associates of Sharpton have publicly charged him with perpetrating a hoax.

Not so fast: The media coverage of the case has increased dramatically as the focus has shifted from a possible gang rape of a black teen-ager to a possible hoax by a trio

Continued on page 22

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TOXICS

Since May 10 many Ponca City toxic victims have been camping out on the state Capitol grounds.

Editor's note: About a year ago In These Times' editors decided to expand our coverage of the environment for two reasons. First, we had come to believe that some of the greatest untold stories of the '80s were environmental—from pesticide poisoning of our nation's groundwater to chemical contamination of the Atlantic Ocean. And second, the toxic trail of one story would inevitably lead us to other, often more appalling, ones.

Perhaps no one knows these stories better than Adrienne Anderson. In her job as western director of the National Toxics Campaign (NTC), she has crisscrossed the country over the past four years compiling data, conducting research and, most important, organizing victims of environmental poisoning. Below, she tells the tale of Ponca City, Okla., where she is currently helping organize residents faced with nightmarish health problems caused by exposure to toxic chemicals spewed by Conoco, the city's largest employer.

By Adrienne Anderson

PONCA CITY, OKLA.

HERE, IN THE HEART OF THE BIBLE BELT, some ungodly things are going on. In this town that is home to more than 50 churches and 25,000 people, residents of the south side are being poisoned by their friendly neighborhood employer, Conoco, which is owned by duPont.

As if in a low-budget horror movie, the area is swamped with toxic sludge. The gooey, Halloween-orange stuff overwhelms creeks, ditches and sewers, bubbles up in parks and yards, pours through foundation walls to fill basements and sends up a blue flame when ignited with a match. In some homes, the sludge seeps up walls to drip from bedroom, kitchen and living-room ceilings. This low-budget horror show is presented under the big-budget aegis of the petrochemical industry and produced with the supervision of local elected officials. The profits are staggering.

Operating in Ponca City since the '30s, Conoco employs several thousand local residents and, as the only industry in town, dominates the local economy and political structure. Old-timers say that Conoco has kept other major industries out of Ponca to

The saga of Ponca City Oklahoma's deadly sludge

maintain control of the area's labor force. Conoco's refinery was purchased by duPont in 1981 and, according to local workers, is now duPont's largest and most profitable refinery.

The nearby south Ponca neighborhoods have been paying the price. Sandwiched between Conoco and the Arkansas River, these neighborhoods were built atop a spring-laden strip of riverbank that originally provided drinking water from a public fountain. But the fountain has been choked with sludge for years, and the adjoining park is now ankle-deep in toxic soup.

A deadly decimal point: Just before Christmas, Ponca City resident Mae Morgan had called me for help in my position as western director of the National Toxics Campaign (NTC) and described the smelly goo, the nearby refinery and the diseases among her neighbors. "The state tested the sludge over a year ago, but wouldn't give us the results," she said. An Oklahoma attorney had more samples taken, "but we never heard back from him either, so we had our own tests done." The lab analyses were back, but she didn't know what they meant.

"Read me the numbers," I said. "Benzene, five zero zero zero point zero," she said.

"No, that can't be; the decimal point's in the wrong place," I replied.

When Morgan sent me the numbers I found out that it wasn't the decimal point, but the people of Ponca City who were in the wrong place. I compared notes with NTC board member Linda Burkhart, a victim of petrochemical poisoning in the Casper, Wyo., subdivision of Brookhurst, which is known as one of the worst toxic nightmares on record.

Burkhart was aghast. "Five thousand parts per billion of benzene in someone's home? Oh, my God, it's worse than Brookhurst," she said.

According to standard toxicology tests, benzene is a carcinogen that also causes birth defects and genetic mutations. The EPA's recommended levels of benzene to protect human health is zero. Besides benzene, the samples included more than 20 other pollutants, including trichloroethylene and arsenic. In addition to their toxicity, many of these chemicals are highly flammable and can explode on contact with the air.

"What should we do?" asked Morgan by phone from Ponca City.

"Call everyone you know and don't know in the area. Form a group, publicly release these results and get ready for a big fight," I advised.

The next day, the Ponca City Toxic Concerned Citizens (PCTCC) was born.

Troops mobilized: In subsequent months the group traded evidence of south Ponca devastation for the National Toxics Campaign's expertise in fighting polluters and the government: medical literature on the chemicals' health effects, copies of the laws, guides on how to use the Freedom of Information Act and other resources to address the community's poisoning.

Within weeks, the PCTCC grew from three founding families to several hundred, headquartered in Morgan's health-products store just two blocks from Conoco. It made an ideal locus for activity, as members could pick up new assignments and discuss the latest lies emanating from Conoco and state agencies. Folks who were once homemakers and retirees soon became lay experts in hydrology, chemistry and medicine.

Invited by the PCTCC to speak at a public meeting on the issue in February, I decided it was time to get a first-hand look at the situation. I thought I was toxic shock-proof, having seen the worst of corporate behavior, government collusion with polluters and EPA insanity in the course of my work with the National Toxics Campaign (formerly the

National Campaign Against Toxic Hazards). But upon visiting the city and its toxic sludge, I couldn't believe my eyes. Atop one poisoned home, a sign attempted description: "Love Canal, Oklahoma." But after a first-hand look at the poisoned town, I thought to myself, "This place makes Love Canal look like a health spa."

Touring the perimeter of Conoco's giant facilities, there could be no question that Conoco was the source of south Ponca City's toxic woes, despite the company's denials. PCTCC members ask, "Who are we supposed to think caused this, the Dairy Queen across town?" Some of the company's more than 600 storage tanks are badly damaged and leaking, including two bordering the residential areas that are surrounded by thick pools of waste. The "troublesome groundwater problem," in the company's phraseology, "is not Conoco's responsibility." Yet the company is now sucking sludge up from the neighborhood under state orders.

Conoco's operations include several hazardous-waste evaporation ponds, a toxic-sludge farm and three incinerators. Effluents from Conoco's evaporation ponds still flow southward in a tributary commonly known by the Ponca Indians as "Stink Creek," toward their tribal lands at White Eagle, six miles away. This is how Dan Jones of the tribe described a long-held folk remedy for ridding the tribes' pets of fleas and ticks: "We throw them into Stink Creek for a swim."

About a decade ago, I was told by tribal members, the Indians' community well at White Eagle was inexplicably closed, and Ponca City built a water line out to them. They say that the tribe is now being billed more than \$30,000 a year for the alternative water. They are looking upstream to Conoco, wondering whether the official explanation for closing the well—excess salinity—really holds water.

Cattle graze along the fence line of the sludge farm, beneath posted signs saying, "Warning: may be potentially harmful." Area Conoco workers say that much of the toxic sludge is trucked in from Conoco's Denver refinery.

Vowing not to eat any locally produced beef while in town, I came upon yet another zoning disaster: a dozen trailer homes wedged between Conoco's sludge farm and its barrel recycling operations, where hundreds of 55-gallon drums are piled 20 feet high, draining residues of toluene and several other toxic agents.

Just an Okie drawl? In viewing videotapes of PCTCC meetings before coming to town, I had been struck by the halting speech of many of the residents. I wondered if they were experiencing solvent exposure—slurred speech, short-term memory loss, brain damage.

It soon became apparent that this was only the surface of Ponca's public health disaster. Southsiders are suffering a variety of ill effects commonly associated with chemical poisoning. During a "toxic tour" I made, fully garbed in protective equipment, I was swarmed by families from throughout the area who showed me, among other things, their gruesome rashes, bruised-looking legs and skin cancers. Mothers with small babies complained of going through boxes of Kleenex daily. Many older children are on allergy shots. "Can this be from the chemicals?" each resident would ask me.

A typical tale: Charles and Peggy Holick abandoned their family home on the recommendation of the city's fire marshall. Holick began corresponding with Conoco in Janu-

ary 1986, asking how he could correct the sludge problem in his basement. "This Conoco guy came out to take a look," says Holick, "and told me the discoloration of the water was due to the juniper berries dropping from the tree in the backyard."

Later Holick received a letter from John L. "Pete" Dimond, Conoco refinery manager, offering to loan a sump pump for the sludge, "as a neighborly jester" (sic). Not seeing this as a reasonable remedy, Holick says he asked, "Is it, or is it not, safe for us to live in this house?" Another letter arrived in December 1986 that again offered the sump-pump solution, but with this caveat: "Conoco will of course require that you sign a release of any and all claims against Conoco with respect to the house or your occupancy of the house."

While the Holicks helped in the early formation of PCTCC, Conoco continued to take the low road, denying responsibility for the problem and investing in an expensive public-relations campaign. In one publication for its employees, Conoco claims that it's a "myth" that the sludge is toxic. It says it is simply a mixture of iron oxide and "harmless bacteria."

PCTCC demands buy-out: Last March the PCTCC proposed that Conoco buy out their poisoned homes, and clean up the polluted area. Conoco rejected the offer outright, claiming in its employee newsletter, the *Ponocoan*, that the proposal was "more like a ransom demand." Playing its last trump card, the PCTCC retained a Washington, D.C., legal team that included Anthony Roisman, former hazardous waste enforcement attorney for the U.S. Justice Department who later became director of Trial Lawyers for Public Justice "after Reagan quit sending cases over for us to prosecute." Of Conoco's rejection of the community's buy-out plan, Roisman, now in private practice, said, "It will never be this cheap again."

The entire affected area could have been purchased by the company for approximately \$10 million, according to the PCTCC. An Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union local leader at the refinery claimed that this amount represents a small percentage of the net profits anticipated at the refinery this year, and represents a tiny fraction of duPont's first quarter net income of \$590 million (a whopping 50 percent increase over its 1987 first quarter earnings).

The same month that Conoco-duPont rejected the buyout, a counter group to PCTCC, called "Poncans for Progress," sprang up. A pep rally held last April 21 was attended primarily by Conoco's employees and their families. Each donned the company's new red T-shirts with the message: "Conoco: Ponca City's Best Neighbor."

Coerced to attend the rally or take a sick day, Conoco workers reported various threats to their jobs if they did not support Conoco's "pump 'n' dump" solution to the south Ponca pollution. Sources within the company have said that more than \$37,000 was spent on the T-shirts, "enough to have relocated a whole bunch of us," said Sue Sober of the PCTCC.

Quality of life: The hardest part of my job with the National Toxics Campaign is watching as toxic chemical poisoning rips the American dream apart in town after town. South Poncans lost the enjoyment of their homes and neighborhood. There are no picnics in the park. Homeowners once proud of their investments have given up. "It doesn't do any good to repaint," one resident explains, "because that stuff from Con-

oco eats it right off."

For years residents had hoped that the air's "bad smell" wouldn't really hurt them, but evidence mounted to the contrary. Helen Burns tried to grow tomatoes one summer, but "they didn't get any bigger than a nickel," she says. Dr. Mark Roberts, a medical consultant for the Oklahoma Department of Health, warned residents early this year not to eat their garden vegetables. Today plastic daisies and tulips decorate front yards where real ones won't grow.

Rev. James Johnson, the minister of a small church in the poisoned zone, lost his 18-year-old daughter to leukemia and his stillborn son was riddled with birth defects. "Pretty soon, you start putting two and two together," he says. He is now co-leading the multiracial toxics group.

The south Ponca local elementary school has been closed since 1973, "after children fainted in droves from a toxic cloud hovering overhead," remembers Anna Sue Rafferty, who was then on the school board. "Our kids were marched up to the park where ambulances carted them off to the hospital." One resident, a sixth-grader at the time, added, "Yeah, it was a hot day, but it looked like snow was falling everywhere."

Death and dye-jobs: Bessie Dolezal's beauty shop sits just across the street from where Conoco dumps much of its wastes into a stream that the company calls "Outfall 003." Locals, however, know it as "Acid Creek." "It's funny," says Dolezal, "the state cosmetology board told me I can't run my beauty shop from here anymore, but the health department says it's safe to live here." She sighs in despair then says, "Oh well, most of my clients have died anyway."

After stripping away several layers of denial, residents finally face the unavoidable truth that their lives are indeed in jeopardy. At the PCTCC's public meeting last February, attended by nearly 1,000, Burkhart tearfully described the illnesses and deaths in her Brookhurst, Wyo., community, from exposures to lower levels of the same chemicals found in Ponca City's sludge. As the "expert," I then detailed the symptoms and chronic health effects of those chemicals, which cause leukemia, birth defects, liver and kidney disease, immune system breakdown, etc. An eerie silence haunted the auditorium, broken when residents stood to recount their own tragic stories of death and disease. One told of losing three of his seven children to cancer.

City's response: Ponca's City Commission, which is dominated by Conoco men, voted in March to dump their properties on the south side of Ponca City. "Too expensive to maintain," Mayor Carl Balcer said of the plan by which city-owned land will be sold for a dollar or given away to non-profit groups, such as local churches or the soccer club. At the same meeting the Commission refused to discuss the PCTCC's proposal for Conoco's buyout of the polluted area.

The City Commission isn't the only organization to turn its back on the problem. The *Ponca City News* is now selectively printing letters about the city's poisoning. None of the churches outside the immediately polluted area have offered any support, catering instead to what southsiders deride as "Conoco Christians."

The state of Oklahoma seems equally unresponsive to south Ponca's plight. Gov. Henry Bellmon denies the problem despite having seen—and smelled—the evidence himself. After brief exposures to south Ponca without protective respiratory gear, Bellmon

became sick and was unable to work for several days. Local headlines read, "Bellmon bedridden after sludge visit."

Shortly thereafter, Bellmon came under fire for a questionable land deal, with oil industry campaign contributors buying the governor's undistinguished farm land at three times the assessed value. Seeking support for its buy-out proposal, PCTCC noted that "we've asked nowhere near three times the assessed value for our properties," and urged the establishment of the "Governor Bellmon South Ponca City Relocation and Medical Trust Fund" with profits from the shady deal.

Undisclosed state of Oklahoma tests—obtained through the Freedom of Information Act in 1988, a year and a half after they were conducted—revealed that all 12 south Ponca areas sampled were saturated with toxic chemicals, with benzene levels up to 25,000 parts per billion in the Willow Springs Park. No one notified area residents of the dangers and health implications of the test results, however, leaving them to suffer prolonged exposures to the dangerous conditions in their homes.

The EPA: Once aware of the state's tests, Ponca City residents demanded EPA action, but the results were all too predictable: samples were taken improperly, broken and otherwise blotched. Repeated EPA tests suffered similar setbacks, which gave Conoco time to suck up incriminating evidence from the most contaminated areas.

Discounting independent evidence of contamination by solvents, heavy metals and hydrocarbons, EPA Region VI decided that the area doesn't qualify for Superfund cleanup monies due to a big-oil loophole exempting petroleum derivatives. Yet an opposite determination was made for the similar Brookhurst case in Region VIII. While Brookhurst is a Superfund site, Ponca City, with higher levels of toxins affecting more people, must await the good will of the company that poisoned them.

Outraged, the PCTCC urged EPA Administrator Lee Thomas to investigate its Region VI office. The reply, referred from Washington, D.C., back down to the Region VI office, contained an even more creative explanation for the area's contamination: "natural gas leaks from home appliances."

Setting up house at the Capitol: Seeking relief from the nauseating exposures and pointing the finger at Bellmon, the PCTCC took the governor up on his statements that the Poncans "could relocate themselves at any time." On May 10 the Ponca victims did just that, setting up tents at the Oklahoma state Capitol beneath Bellmon's window. The toxic refugees put up a billboard naming the new community: "Gov. Henry Bellmon South Ponca City Toxic Relocation Project."

That same day the governor said at a press conference, "They'll be gone when the first rain comes."

To show the National Toxics Campaign's support, I pitched my own tent with the toxic refugees. The first night Capitol security guards stopped by to warn us of the area's high crime rate. "Inside or outside the Capitol?" I wondered aloud to fellow campers. Secure in that answer, we all slept soundly under the stars.

Support poured in for the toxic refugees. Capitol workers brought down cafeteria leftovers. Postal workers, firefighters and Agent Orange-exposed veterans came to evening prayer vigils. Boxes of fruit were donated. Citizens from around the state joined the tent city with their own tents in support.

On day five of the encampment residents descended upon the Oklahoma Democrats' convention, gathering enough delegate support to overwhelmingly pass a resolution urging Bellmon to seek federal disaster aid for the immediate evacuation of south Ponca City.

Religious leaders from around the state began to respond with moral indignation. Father Jogues Epple, vicar of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Clinton, Okla., is now mobilizing Christian support for justice in Ponca City, arguing that "the word 'Christ' means 'anointed in oil,' but I don't think our founders had Ponca's toxic sludge in mind."

Entering its third month, the tent city is taking on a more permanent character, with rocking chairs, a laundry line and enough munitions for an army. Still waiting on Bellmon to evacuate them, the PCTCC plans to stay. "We like it here," says Lester Burns, noting he hasn't taken a single sinus pill since moving to the Capitol. "We'll be here until Bellmon finds us someplace else to live."

So far, Bellmon has failed to act, despite the fact that elsewhere in the U.S. local residents have been evacuated in less dire situations. In one, Wyoming Gov. Mike Sullivan sought federal disaster area relief to evacuate hydrogen sulfide-exposed residents of Rawhide Village. In another, the Lowell City Council relocated residents with arsenic in back yards of their Massachusetts subdivision.

But cracks in the state's do-nothing policy have begun to form. On Memorial Day (day 20 of the toxic tent city), Oklahoma's Democratic State Treasurer Ellis Edwards announced that not enough had been done to help the Poncans. During a June meeting with the PCTCC and National Toxics Campaign, Edwards pledged to fund his own independent investigation of the Ponca City disaster.

Cracks are now appearing at the federal level as well. Since the PCTCC's formation the U.S. Justice Department has finally clamped down on Conoco for 15 years of Clean Air Act violations that the EPA had failed to enforce. But despite protests from PCTCC and NTC, Conoco will only have to pay a \$250,000 fine.

Can't go home again: Leaving Ponca City fills one with guilt, yet after each trip I return to Denver's infamous "Brown Cloud" breathing a heavy sigh of relief. For days afterward I lay on the couch watching *Leave It to Beaver* in an effort to block images of the horrors I've seen, and recuperate from the fevers, known to my friends as the "Ponca Pox."

The toxic poisoning of America has reached monumental proportions. Existing remedies are inadequate against the scale of the crisis. Ponca City, Love Canal, Brookhurst and Times Beach. The litany will continue until we, as a nation, adopt policies of toxic prevention, forcing polluters to eliminate the deadliest chemicals, alter hazardous processes, and substitute materials proven safe, before entering the stream of commerce to eventually poison our water, air and lives.

We cannot let corporations treat our communities as toxic toilets, aided by government agencies and abetted by elected paties for these polluters. Because the sad truth is that these toxic towns, once broken, cannot be put back together again. □

For more information on Ponca City's toxic disaster, contact Adrienne Anderson at (303) 333-9714.

Speaking of Duarte in the past tense and Salvador's future imperfect

By Chris Norton

SAN SALVADOR

LIKE A PATRIARCH IN ONE OF GABRIEL GARCIA Marquez' surrealistic novels, Salvadoran President Jose Napoleon Duarte, watching his world slowly crumble around him, also began to fall apart. Stricken by incurable cancer of the stomach and liver, he is unlikely to resume his post. His exit signals the end of an era in El Salvador, as well as a defeat for U.S. policy there.

Duarte and his Christian Democrats were the "third force," the pro-U.S. center that had eluded American strategists in Vietnam. Promising reform that would weaken the landed oligarchy and undercut the rising left, Duarte's 1984 election to the presidency convinced a skeptical U.S. Congress to increase aid. It also allowed the Reagan administration to deepen the war and temporarily put the FMLN guerrillas on the defensive.

Yet when the stricken Duarte bade a tearful farewell to his government at Ilopango Air Force Base (transfer site for secret contra arms shipments) and was flown on a huge Galaxy C-141 U.S. military plane to the heart of the Empire for treatment, he was already a defeated man.

His Christian Democratic Party, discredited by corruption charges, had been roundly

defeated by the rightist Arena Party in the March assembly elections. Arena now controls the assembly and is in a strong position to win the presidency next year.

The vote reflected widespread disillusionment with Duarte, who in 1984 had promised peace and economic recovery but instead had presided over a deepening war and continued economic deterioration.

Following the March election debacle, Duarte's party was hit by a split over who

EL SALVADOR

would be its presidential candidate next year. The two rivals were Julio Adolfo Rey Prendes, Duarte's former chief of staff and communications minister, and Fidel Chavez Mena, the former planning minister.

Rey, a hard-drinking, baggy-eyed, Chicago-style pol, had long ago maneuvered himself into control of the government's patronage apparatus and the party structure. But the U.S. Embassy, concerned that Rey was unelectable because of his circle's reputation for corruption, supported Chavez, a colorless but honest technocrat. Duarte, depressed and reclusive, stayed on the sidelines until the last minute, resisting the embassy's frantic efforts to get him to intervene on Chavez' behalf.

"Just the same": Already Duarte is being referred to in the past tense. This represents an astonishingly rapid descent for a man painted by the Reagan administration as indispensable to democracy in Central America. "The country is going on just the same," notes one Latin American ambassador. "Duarte's exit has made no difference at all."

Of course, "just the same" means not very well for the U.S. Duarte was Washington's "Great White Hope," the reformer who would turn the war around and be the Reagan administration's model for defeating left insurgencies. And Duarte started off to rave reviews. After his first year in office he was lauded by the U.S. media for having improved human rights, checked the guerrillas and tamed the army and the right.

Now, however, the guerrillas are stepping up their activities, a frustrated army is killing more civilians and the right is on the rise. To many observers, despite \$3 billion in U.S. aid, the polarization and violence of the early '80s seem to be returning.

"Duarte is a sad figure, a tragic figure," says a European diplomat. "He's a man who lived in a world of illusions. He wanted to be the first democratically elected president, and then he got there and he couldn't do anything."

When Duarte returned from exile in Venezuela in 1980 he joined a military dominated junta, rationalizing that his presence would help prevent a bloodbath. During this period military/rightist death squads ran wild, killing more than 30,000 suspected leftists. Although Duarte later said he was powerless to do anything about the squads, others in

Duarte frequently was praised for improving human rights, but the improvements were due more to outside pressure than to any reforms Duarte instigated.

his party disagreed. The party's progressive wing, led by Ruben Zamora, withdrew and eventually aligned with the guerrillas.

From then on Duarte argued that if he were elected president in 1984—rather than being appointed president of the junta by the military—he would have more power. Duarte promised to achieve peace through negotiation, address the structural causes of the conflict and respect human rights.

But quickly it became clear that even as the elected president Duarte did not have much real power. His idea of dialogue was for the guerrillas to lay down their arms and incorporate into the "democratic" system. When the rebels put forward their own demands Duarte quickly lost interest and yielded to pressure from the army and the U.S. Embassy, ending the dialogue after only two meetings in 1984.

The U.S. main man: Although many reforms were implemented in 1980, they never received the support they needed to function. After Duarte was elected in 1984, the U.S. Embassy pressured him to downplay the reforms and make concessions to his traditional enemies in the oligarchy, a key part of the fragile counterinsurgency alliance that the embassy didn't want to alienate.

Duarte frequently was praised for improving human rights in his country, but the improvements were due more to outside pressures, such as warnings from the U.S. that continued abuses jeopardized U.S. aid, than to any reforms Duarte instigated. The army could humor U.S. sensibilities while the war was going well. Yet with the guerrillas taking the initiative, army killings are on the rise.

Under Duarte there were political openings such as greater press freedom (especially on TV) and the return of rebel leaders such as Ruben Zamora. But those achievements may prove transitory. Duarte's supporters say his major success has been to start the country on the road to democracy. But the most thoughtful of them admit that El Salvador isn't a democracy, and that his major failure is that the left hasn't been brought "into the process."

Perhaps a moderate center could have worked in 1972, when Duarte, allied with the left, won the presidency but had his victory stolen by the military. The country was far more polarized when he returned from exile in 1980 and made the controversial decision to ally not with the left but with the military, the Christian Democrats' traditional enemy.

Aligning with the military turned out to be Duarte's pact with the devil. It turned the party to the right, setting it on a course that would see its traditional reform program abandoned under the exigencies of the U.S. counterinsurgency project. And with the exit of the younger, more radical members of the party, it was left in the hands of older, anti-communist "politicos" like Rey.

Even if Duarte had seriously wanted to negotiate peace, he would have had little support in the party for confronting the powerful military or the U.S. Embassy. Duarte was ambivalent, and the party, left in the hands of its most corrupt members, was more interested in taking advantage of the U.S. funds flowing into the country and building its patronage machine. Antonio Guevara Lecayo, the Christian Democratic president of the Assembly, symbolized to what depths the party had sunk. Fond of gold jewelry, which he carefully removes when interviewed on foreign television, Guevara supplemented his modest salary by importing more than three dozen expensive, duty free cars and reselling them. Presently he is finishing construction of a hilltop mansion that cost more than half a million dollars, which amounts to a fortune in a Third World country.

The Arena Party, although it has learned to moderate its image, represents the Salvadoran oligarchy and seeks to overturn the reforms of the Duarte era. It also talks of stepping up the civil war, which would accelerate the already increasing trend of human rights violations.

The best that the left here can hope for is a Democratic win in November's U.S. elections and a subsequent reduction of U.S. military aid to El Salvador.

Chris Norton is *In These Times'* correspondent in El Salvador.

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Some modest proposals

Economy

By David M. Gordon

THE HIGHEST ECONOMIC POLICY PRIORITY for the left in the coming years should be to seek reversal of the slash-and-burn economics of the conservative era.

This should involve efforts to move away from singular reliance on profit-led, trickle-down economics and toward people-led, building-up economics. We should aim to challenge the wisdom and productiveness of policies that promote growth by rewarding the few and demanding sacrifices of the many.

This constitutes an historic and, in most respects, a long-term battle. But there are specific fronts on which progress is possible and urgently needed now. Six policy priorities seem vital:

- We need to take specific steps to promote real wage growth and wage equalization. These can immediately include a significant increase in the minimum wage, labor law reform and more rapid progress toward pay equity.

- We should challenge both the policies and processes that have imposed record-high real interest rates in the '80s. This requires strong political pressure on the Federal Reserve Board to lower interest rates—say, by about 1.5 percentage points—and consideration of procedural changes to reduce the political independence of the Fed.

- We must immediately reverse the massively regressive changes in our tax structure, moving quickly to increase taxes on the wealthy back to their pre-1980 levels. In coming months this should involve a commitment to restore the top individual-income tax bracket to 38.5 percent.

- We need to launch a new wave of initiatives and investments in essential domestic programs, ranging from infrastructure to "social programs." Since these programs need to be financed without massive increases in the federal deficit, they need to be coupled with higher taxes on the wealthy and with reductions or at least a freeze in military spending. Among program priorities, a huge new federal commitment to child care strikes me as one of the most important and politically promising.

- We need to inaugurate a new era of social control over corporate conduct and investment. This includes mechanisms to regulate excesses of corporate decisions—early plant-closing notification is an obvious example—and we need to develop instruments for providing public subsidies, credits and capital for essential investments that the private sector ignores.

- We must restructure our relationships with the Third World, providing them with a much stronger platform on which to escape the poverty and austerity of the recent period. The most immediate priority here should be restructuring and renegotiation of Third World debts, including something like a 50-percent writedown of current debt obligations.

These priorities are not fanciful. To a substantial degree, they are already on the

At the June 24-26 Denver meeting of the 1988 Democratic Party platform committee, a 3,500-word non-controversial document drawn up by supporters of Michael Dukakis met with general approval. The proposed platform, like the Dukakis campaign, was designed to offend as few people or groups as possible, while also giving enough to the party's most loyal constituents so that they would not opt out of the campaign. Thus, while nothing was said on most issues to challenge existing policy, the draft platform does advocate passage of an Equal Rights Amendment and the right to abortion regardless of ability to pay, as well as a plank—insisted upon by Jesse Jackson—branding South Africa "a terrorist state" and calling for total economic disengagement.

The Jackson forces on the platform committee plan to raise other issues at the convention, including higher taxes

political table as part of Jesse Jackson's "Budget Plan and Economic Program for Jobs, Peace and Justice," formally released in California on May 24.

The Jackson program, with minor exceptions, articulates these priorities and, where financing is necessary, demonstrates where the money can come from. It does not aim at utopia on earth by mid-1989, but is a detailed, practicable agenda. It can potentially serve as a useful educational and organizing tool for the left.

The Jackson budget plan proposes a concrete set of increased taxes on the wealthy and corporations; these increases, if enacted, would generate roughly \$80 billion per year in additional federal tax revenues. The Dukakis campaign, as of the time of writing, has refused to take a position on taxes. Their implacability has obvious roots: On the one hand, they apparently refuse to embrace a progressive tax program, one that would reverse some of the damage done to our tax structure during the 1980s, either or both because they want to avoid stepping on the toes of their affluent and corporate supporters or because their economic advisers think that tax increases should cut into consumption, not income from wealth. On the other hand, they remember the Mondale debacle too clearly to be willing to propose significant across-the-board tax increases. Thus, silence....

At the convention and in the general election, therefore, the Democratic Party's commitment to a progressive policy profile will be at stake. Will the Democrats move to reverse policies that place the needs of the wealthy and corporations ahead of the rest of us? Will the party have the courage to propose increased taxes on the wealthy, concentrating the burden where it hurts the least, or will it continue to bury the courage of its historic commitments? □

David M. Gordon teaches economics at the New School for Social Research and edits *Progressive Agenda*, a participatory newsletter on policy and politics. He provided analysis and advice on economic policy to the Jesse Jackson 1988 presidential campaign.

for the wealthy, a freeze on military spending, a no-first-use pledge on nuclear weapons and support for an independent Palestinian state. In all, said Eleanor Holmes Norton, Jackson's platform spokeswoman, there were seven issues on which she was collecting signatures for minority reports, so that these issues can be discussed at the party convention on July 19.

The following six pieces discuss some of the issues that we believe are vital to our nation's well-being. They represent the views of experts in their respective fields and are presented for the consideration not only of Democratic Party leaders but also everyone concerned about the future of American democracy.

Foreign Policy

By Pam Solo

THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION'S FOREIGN policy is bankrupt. It's time the Democrats declared it so and boldly advocate a new direction for America's global role in the 21st century.

Under Ronald Reagan foreign policy has been reduced to the art of transferring arms. We have had a weapons policy, not a foreign policy.

National and international security have become equated with weapons, military strategies and arms transfers. Economic assistance to many poorer allied countries is little more than payment for military bases.

A critical battle between George Bush and Michael Dukakis will be over foreign policy. That battle can be over resumes and who owns the past, or it can be over the direction and leadership for a new foreign policy that meets the challenges of a changing world. The new leadership must be ready to deal with the world as it is in 1988, not as it was in 1945.

The changes underway indicating a fundamental rethinking of our country's approaches to security and foreign policy are:

- The challenge posed by the \$150 billion federal deficit, the trade imbalance of roughly the same amount both at a time of a record high \$320 billion military outlay;

- The growing recognition that security derives from economic and social strength and cannot be bought with weapons;

- The emergence of Japan, West Germany and other allies as global economic powers;

- *Glasnost* and *perestroika* in the Soviet Union;

- The INF Treaty and the potential for future strategic and conventional arms reductions treaties;

- The urgency of dealing with economic violence at home and in the Third World; and

- The emergence of international third-party initiatives to settle conflicts in Central America, the Mideast and between the superpowers.

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The Democrats have a choice: They can propose a new foreign policy or hide behind old concepts. But if they slip into the White House without defining and arguing for a new foreign and military policy, however, they will be faced once again, as Jimmy Carter was, with a highly organized right-wing Cold War establishment that will block initiatives and press for a new arms race and intervention in the Third World. To win and succeed they must go in with an agenda and a mandate for leadership.

That agenda should build on the following:

- The primary sources of security are economic and social. The size of military budgets does not equal defense, much less security. It is time to stop throwing money at the military and defense contractors who fuel the arms race by interservice rivalry and greed. And it is time our developed allies in Europe and Japan define and pay for their own security needs.

- The military should be a tool of last resort for our government, which is charged with protecting the political, social, economic and geographical security of the nation.

- Military solutions to conflicts are increasingly dangerous and obsolete. The na-

ture of modern weapons, the global economy and the interdependence among nations creates a new political reality: no nation can achieve security unilaterally.

- Giving direction to a new international system at the end of the Cold War represents the single greatest opportunity and challenge for the next president. In the context of restructuring the U.S.-USSR relationship the U.S. should press an aggressive peace policy leading toward: 1. nuclear disarmament commencing with deep strategic cuts; 2. conventional reductions and restructuring of forces along the lines of non-provocative defense; 3. establishment of a non-intervention regime, and active reg-

ional conflict resolution; at ending violence in the through support for nation and economic deve

The next president will lead into the next century as a peaceful and at peace by emphasizing investment in America's future science and technology, in a competitive; in creating job stability and quality of life for families. An effective foreign policy one that genuinely serves the national interests.

Pam Solo is co-director of the Center for International Security in C

Environment

By Dick Russell

THE MOST FRIGHTENING OMISSION OF THE 1988 presidential campaign has been the low priority given to the environmental crisis. At a time when the ecological disaster facing the U.S.—and the entire planet—demands an unprecedented commitment of both budget and cooperative initiative, the candidates have ducked the implications and have failed to propose alternatives.

For this reason the Democratic Party should redefine national security—no longer in terms of nuclear weapons and military spending, but rather the state of our natural environment and the quality of our resources.

It should then call for an environmental summit, where world leaders can work out mutual strategies to deal with global warming, depletion of the ozone layer, destruction of tropical rainforests, loss of plant and animal species and overpopulation. That these dilemmas are as intrinsically linked as the global economy—and that in fact their impact will determine the economic future—must be seen as crucial.

A cabinet-level Department of the Environment should be created with the Environmental Protection Agency under its umbrella and a constant liaison maintained with the departments of Agriculture, Energy and Interior. The department should mandate policies devoted to massive research-and-development funding for alternative approaches in energy, agriculture, industry and waste management. It should be given powers to enforce existing laws such as the Clean Air, Clean Water and Safe Drinking Water acts.

The Democrats should also call for a multimillion-dollar reduction in military spending, and use the diverted tax dollars to pay for clean-up programs and alternative research. A fund ought to be established for a massive educational effort focusing not only on the cause-and-effect relationship

of the ecological holocaust we face, but also on how people's choices (what they buy, how consciously they live) can make a difference.

Specifically, we need:

- A national energy policy that calls for a phase-out of reliance on fossil fuels, and vastly expanded resources for solar and other forms of non-nuclear energy supplies. Besides the havoc caused by acid rain and localized air pollution, a June 1988 report by the World Meteorological Organization and United Nations Environment Program states that, with present pollution trends (largely from burning of fossil fuels), global temperatures will rise over the next century at a rate six times faster than humankind has ever experienced.

- A national food policy that advocates a cessation of chemical-intensive agriculture, with emphasis on integrated pest management and organic farming; that trains farmers in ways to reduce soil erosion; that cracks down on coastal pollution and over-harvest by commercial fishermen.

- A national toxics policy that forces industries to stop production of the worst pollutants and reduce hazardous waste at its source; acknowledges the vast number of contaminated areas and arranges for relocation of citizens where necessary; and initiates education about toxic household waste. Comprehensive testing of drinking water supplies and installation of modern treatment systems must also take place.

- Declaration of a national garbage emergency, with a de-emphasis on incineration and a World War II-style recycling of paper, bottles and cans, compost, plastic, etc.

The fundamentals of life are at stake here. This message must get across: We can either make conscious choices now or our children will reap the poisoned world that we are sowing.

Dick Russell writes on environmental issues for several national publications.

Family

By Tom Bates

MICHAEL DUKAKIS WILL HAVE TO DO better than "Good jobs at good wages" to assemble the economically diverse post-Reagan coalition he needs to win in November. But the Massachusetts governor's meat-and-potatoes slogan would have more appeal if he advanced it as part of a comprehensive family policy agenda.

This was supposed to be the year that concern about families and children dominated political campaigns, from the presidential primaries on down. Instead, as in the past, family issues have so far been treated as separate agendas—women's issues, children's issues, labor issues, senior issues—the very concerns that attracted the unfair and unfortunate label "special interests" in the last election.

But if the Democrats link these issues in a practical family policy agenda, they can grab the allegiance of a broad coalition—the baby-boom generation, "new collar" workers, minorities, seniors, labor unions and the poor, as well as low-to-middle-income "cultural conservatives" who left the Democratic Party in recent years because Republicans claimed to be the "pro-family" party. All those constituencies are vitally concerned about the stability of their families in this era of change and insecurity.

The demographics are on our side. Current public policy is based on an image of the family that exists mostly in reruns of *Ozzie and Harriet* and *The Donna Reed Show*. Only one in 10 families conforms to the '50s norm of a breadwinner father and a stay-at-home mother ably managing the work and home fronts. Most adults today have jobs and children, at a time when we're in the middle of a new baby boom: the number of preschool-age children is higher today than it has been for decades. At the same time, our senior population is growing, with changing health and independence concerns. Some sloganeers are calling this generation of working adults the "sandwich" generation, squeezed between the demands of dependent children and dependent parents.

They need relief. For middle-income families, growing work and family conflicts are a matter of increasing stress and insecurity. For low-income families, these are questions of survival. Today poverty in the U.S. is a family issue—most poor adults are women, and most of them are poor because they are mothers who have sole re-

sponsibility for their children. One disturbing fact is that 40 percent of the poor today are children. They find a way to support their families.

A strong family agenda has what poor and middle-income families have in common. They all need:

- Access to affordable, quality child care.
- Job-protected parental leave.
- A tax system that furthers family burdens;

- Better schools for their children.
- Broadened access to health care.
- Flexible employment opportunities balancing job and family.

This is where "Good jobs" come in. Appeals based on the family give the Democrats a chance to examine the security of the family raised by the Reagan economic policy. Family change in the '70s and '80s was at least partly driven by economic wage erosion meant more than two paychecks to stay afloat. A vast opportunity gap has been created by the Reagan years—between the low-wage jobs that do not support a family and the better-paying, high-opportunity jobs that require higher education. To bridge that gap today, a family policy must be a commitment to the wage, benefit and job security of that lower-income family. We will see more families in today's economy.

A strong family appeal is what Democrats hold the loyalty of voters, who currently favor George Bush by two to one. (Anxious Bush campaigner date will stress child care to women voters.) Most important, a family agenda allows the Democrats to revive their venerable themes of justice for a generation that is impatient, but anxious about the future of their families in a time of social change. A family agenda lets the Democrats be more inspiring, reassuring and hopeful for the future, which is what they need.

Tom Bates, California Assembly member (San Diego), is co-chair of the California Joint Select Task Force on the Family. He was California Co-chair of the Jackson campaign.

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Health Care

By Quentin Young

DESPITE EXPENDITURES IN EXCESS OF \$570 billion (more than \$2,000 per person), the U.S. health care system fails the American people in many ways: between 38 and 50 million of us (the "working poor") are unprotected against costs of illness. Those in poverty get third-class care; fewer than 40 percent of those below the official poverty level qualify for the patchwork of declining state programs. The excluded, ominously, are children and women.

The entry of huge venture capital corporations has transformed the traditional care and service premises of the system into a market-driven industry, already consolidating toward the abuses of monopoly. The results are huge corporate profits, further inflation of costs and new barriers to access. Universal standards of quality and enhancement of the nation's health status are the abandoned ideals.

Meanwhile, beginning in 1965, Canada has reformed its health service (which had closely resembled our own) through a federally financed, province administered universal insurance plan. Problems, insoluble here, are dramatically controlled. Health-care costs approach 12 percent of our gross national product (GNP). They are less than 9 percent of GNP in Canada.

Availability of care in Canada is now based exclusively on need, not wealth. The hospital, out-patient and nursing home services are high quality with community input.

Economics, urgent health-care needs and elementary commitment to human rights dictate that the U.S. health system be reformed, and thereby leave South Africa to be the only industrialized nation without a commitment to universal care of its people.

The elements of this reform would be:

- Federal sponsorship, financed by general revenues;
- Emphasis on prevention and early detection of disease;
- Analysis and confrontation of the social factors in our major contemporary health problems, e.g., tobacco and industrial pollution in cancer; diet in heart disease; alienation in substance abuse;
- De-emphasis on high technology and end-of-life intervention and emphasis on ambulatory health enhancing activities;
- Integrating the resources and facilities of the system in school, workplace and community to identify and correct sources of ill health; and

• Professional payment based (as in Canada) on fees negotiated by the state (or regional) governments and physicians.

With government already underwriting more than 50 percent of our health-care costs, the transfer of present expenditures (e.g., corporate health benefits for employees) would finance the new system with no additional burden. □

Quentin Young, M.D., is president of the Health and Medicine Policy Research Group, based in Chicago.

Housing

By Chester Hartman

OUR NATION'S HOUSING CRISIS IS SEVERE and growing. It is rooted in the structural inability of the housing market to provide decent, affordable housing for tens of millions of Americans, due to the expanding gap between housing costs and people's incomes. The obscenity of outright homelessness is the most extreme and public manifestation of this failure. But the nation's declining homeownership rate and the widespread incidence of mortgage default and foreclosure, as well as the fact that well over 7 million households must pay more than half their income for housing and that doubling-up and other pre-homelessness situations abound, also illustrate the crisis. In truth, we still are a nation in which one-third (or more) are ill-housed, if by that term we mean not only decent but affordable housing.

Only government action can reverse these trends and cope with this crisis. Required are:

- Vastly expanded subsidies;
- Directing these subsidies solely to the production, rehabilitation and acquisition of housing permanently affordable to lower-income households;
- Steps to lower the cost of providing housing, so as to decrease the affordability gap and the amount of government subsidies needed; and
- Controls over the private housing market that will prevent the loss of lower-income housing.

A threshold step is to declare as a National Housing Goal a *right* to decent, affordable housing for all Americans, to be achieved by the year 2000. (In the 1949 and 1968 Housing Acts, Congress created and then reiterated a National Housing Goal of decent housing—with no mention of affordability—but did not proclaim it a right and established neither timetables nor programs to turn this rhetorical goal into reality.)

Government subsidies along the order of \$30-50 billion a year will be needed—several times what HUD and Farmers Home Administration now allocate for low-income housing. There is no way we can solve the nation's housing problem on the cheap.

Permanently affordable housing means housing outside the profit sector—the development, permanent ownership and management of housing by non-profit private and public entities: churches and synagogues, labor unions, neighborhood groups, community development corpora-

tions, limited-equity cooperatives, tenant organizations, local and state housing authorities. Unlike private developers, landlords and managers, whose aim is profit maximization, social sector bodies of this sort seek to provide the best housing at the lowest cost for the most people. They will need large amounts of technical assistance, much of which can be bought on a fee basis from competent actors in the private sector.

Beyond shifting from a profit-maximizing to a social sector system for providing housing to the non-rich—which in itself will significantly lower the cost of the final product—the central reason housing costs so much—the cost of money borrowed to produce or purchase it—must be attacked. Repayment of debt is in effect a permanent burden attached to virtually all housing, and the cost to consumers—renters indirectly, owners directly—accounts for roughly two out of every three housing consumption dollars. Substituting one-time government capital grants to social sector housing producers for mortgages and bonds to build and rehabilitate housing can cut ongoing housing costs to consumers by two-thirds. Voluntary assignment of mortgage debt and title to social sector housing entities on the part of lower-income and elderly homeowners can effect a similar reduction in housing costs (and, in the case of the low-income elderly, such a program should be accompanied by a decent lifetime annuity). Government subsidies would then be used to retire the existing debt over time, and once it was retired the housing would remain permanently debt-free, with occupants required to pay only utilities, property taxes, maintenance, insurance and other occupancy costs. Those with income too low to afford even these costs would receive supplementary subsidies.

Effective controls over rent increases, evictions, conversion of rental housing to condominiums and loss of lower-rent housing through undermaintenance, abandonment, demolition and conversion to other uses should be instituted, treating the lower-rent housing stock as an endangered species requiring strict government protections. Where private owners are unwilling or unable to operate their housing under such protections, provisions should be made for the rapid transfer of these units to the tenants or other social sector organizations. □

Chester Hartman is a fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies. He is co-editor, with Marcus Raskin, of *Winning America: Ideas and Leadership for the '90s*, to be published in July.

EDITORIAL

IN THESE TIMES

"...with liberty and justice for all"

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Jackson campaign is a step in a long journey

With the primary elections over and Michael Dukakis assured of the Democratic nomination, it's time to begin assessing Jesse Jackson's campaign—both what he has accomplished and what that means to the left in the years ahead. The accomplishments are of historic proportions. When Jackson entered the 1984 primaries, few black leaders and fewer whites took him seriously. Among black politicians Jackson was widely seen as a showboater, or as a threat to their own positions of influence in the party's white ruling circles. But despite a poorly organized and grossly underfunded campaign, Jackson galvanized the black electorate, winning such large majorities that he forced even the more conservative black politicians into his corner early on in 1988.

Getting respect: Four years ago Jackson proved that blacks would give solid support to an attempt at the presidency by one of their own—and that they would come out to vote for such a candidate in unprecedented numbers. This year Jackson proved that whites, too, would vote for a black if what he said made more sense to them than the appeals of other candidates. In 1984 Jackson received about 3.25 million votes, the great bulk of it from blacks. This year he won almost 7 million votes, again mostly from blacks, but with a large increase in support from Hispanics and whites—especially in the later primaries when his campaign was better organized and began to receive more coverage in the media. As had happened in many cities where blacks have been elected mayor in recent years, on the national scene Jackson has given blacks a new sense of confidence and pride and has won for himself and for his community a real, if often grudging, respect among whites.

If Jackson has been important in validating and strengthening the black community, he has been equally so for the left. His primary constituency, of course, is the most consistently left in American political life. Virtually all black politicians are on the left, if only to be able to remain in office. Thus, for example, the Black Congress-

sional Caucus has the highest rating of any group in Congress in the Americans for Democratic Action liberal quotient voting survey—with an average score of 92 percent on 25 key House votes. Similarly, Jackson's other target constituents—Hispanics, union labor and women—tend to be on the left. (Democratic Hispanic and women House members had ADA liberal quotients of 82 and 75 percent.)

But Jackson is the first politician on the national scene to run in major party primaries on an unabashedly left platform. In doing so he has proven not only that there is a vast potential constituency for the left, but also—and more important—that an intelligently articulated left politics is capable of overcoming popular cynicism and indifference and of bringing large numbers of new voters into the electoral arena.

Jackson has shown the left that it can bring its message to the people within the mainstream of American political life—and that it is most effective to do so within the two-party system. For those on the left who have defined themselves as outsiders, dreaming of third parties challenging the Democrats and Republicans, the 1988 elections should be a watershed. For Jackson has done more than gain a hearing for his ideas and enhancement of his prestige. He has also begun to change the nature of the debates within the party. And in doing so he has created the potential for a continuing process in which programs based on a different set of principles could gain enough popular support so that other party leaders will be unable to ignore them.

On the road again: If this is so, then the Democratic Party convention this month is not the end of the Jackson campaign, but only the second milestone on a long road to the transformation of American politics. It is a road on which there is room for many travellers, and many ideas. We hope to provide a forum for some of these ideas, which is why we have assembled the programmatic suggestions on pages 11-13. Few, if any, of the ideas presented here or by Jackson in the primaries will be adopted by the Democratic convention or by the Dukakis campaign. But they are beginning to gain a hearing in many forums around the country.

In that process lies the best hope for a new politics in the years ahead.

Lionel Delvingne

LETTERS

Consumers Union

YOU RECENTLY PUBLISHED (ITT, APRIL 27) A CURIOUS letter from David Berliner, spokesman for Consumers Union (CU), publisher of *Consumer Reports* magazine. He indignantly complained about your earlier story (ITT, April 6), "*Consumer Reports' nice liberals just happen to be union-busters*," while he gingerly tiptoed from one convenient "fact" to another. As an 18-year union employee of CU, I'd like to footnote a few of his "facts."

- Berliner boasts of the medical and sick-leave benefits enjoyed by CU's union employees. But he keeps mum about our shameful pension plan (and the generous plan our managers granted themselves).

- Berliner says that union jobs at CU have grown from 132 to 185 since 1983. His long-term memory fails him: In 1980, more than 350 union employees worked at CU. (Since 1980, management's ranks have tripled.)

- Berliner gleefully quotes our top contractual salary, \$978.92 per week, and adds that beginning mail clerks earn \$16,000 a year. Truth is, only a handful of employees are in that top group. Among them are scientists with Ph.D.s and decades of professional experience. As for mail clerks, the U.S. Postal Service starts them at \$21,800.

- Berliner also "forgets" that the cost of living in our metropolitan New York area is the highest in the continental U.S. An average house here costs \$345,000.

- It's no happenstance that Berliner quotes salaries as of December 31, 1986. That's when our contract expired. Despite CU's record revenues, we've had no raise in nearly two and a half years. Our managers generously offer us about 2 percent a year, plus a "pool" solely for favored employees. (Meanwhile, they've given themselves two raises, each reportedly averaging about 8 percent.)

If CU is not union-busting, why does it now find itself on the AFL-CIO boycott list—for the second time in four years?

CU's "nice liberals" seem to have forgotten that the dedication of their employees is a precious and fragile resource. We can only hope that stories such as yours will help remind them.

Alex Markovich
Senior editor, *Consumer Reports*
Vice-Chair, CU unit, Newspaper Guild

Humorists unite!

AS AN OCCASIONAL SATIRIST MYSELF, I COULD only sympathize with cartoonist Jennifer Berman's problem in dealing with humorlessness on the U.S. left.

Back in 1979 *In These Times* ran a little spoof of mine called "The Duck Hunter." I very obviously lampooned Michael Cimino's *The Deer Hunter*, retelling it as a controversial German World War II movie about three cherubic Nazi soldiers who're seized by evil French Resistance terrorists, who in turn proceed to play Russian roulette with those nice small-town German kids. Oh, and I changed Cimino's mystical reindeer into aggressive ducks.

Well, word soon reached me that some *ITT* readers out there had taken my spoof seriously. For instance, there were calls from people asking where they could find that new German movie, you know, *The Duck Hunter*. ("It's so much like *The Deer Hunter*!")

And I realized what some wise man meant when he said that "the lot of the satirist is a hard one." It's even harder in America, and apparently more so on the U.S. left.

By the way, I thought Ms. Berman's cartoon-portraits were very witty and funny. They showed true artistry. And I think her reply is just great. "Satire comprehension, F minus"—she hits the dull nail right on the head. More! More!

Gene H. Bell-Villada
Williamstown, Mass.

Execution

I JOIN WITH MESSRS. OLLMAN, ET AL. (LETTERS, JUNE 18), in urging that the 14 sentenced to death in Grenada not be executed. I do so, however, because I am opposed to the death penalty, not because I have any doubt about their guilt—any more than people much better informed about the matter than Ramsey Clark, including most Grenadians and Fidel Castro, have any such doubt.

Prime Minister Maurice Bishop and a number of his senior colleagues were executed by uniformed soldiers of the People's Revolutionary Army (PRA). A military government, headed by Gen. Austin, commander of the PRA, took over. They gave no indication of innocence—say, by giving the dead a decent burial and according them a period of mourning. Instead, the bodies of the dead were dumped in a pit and burned. Soldiers supporting the junta fanned out over the island, seizing Bishop loyalists and throwing them into prison.

I would also note that the most eminent Bishop supporters who were lucky enough to escape execution, including Messrs. Louison and Radix, testified against Coard and Austin in the trial. Incidentally, the defendants had excellent attorneys. It was these attorneys who stigmatized the court as unconstitutional, because it derived its authority from the Bishop government, which for purposes of their argument the attorneys stigmatized as itself unconstitutional.

David C. Williams
Bethesda, Md.

El Salvador

I HOPE A GOOD MANY OF THE TV AUDIENCE WATCHED Public Broadcasting's *Frontline*, *Our Forgotten War in El Salvador*. How like Vietnam—helicopter gunships, American advisers, bombed out villages, dead, dying and crippled peasants. Ronald Reagan has sent three billion dollars of our taxpayers' money to El Salvador and the people are worse off than they were seven years ago.

But El Salvador is a democracy. Reagan told us how these people trudged miles and

waited in the hot sun to vote, a dramatic demonstration of their dedication to democracy. He didn't mention that they might lose their jobs, or far worse, if their ID cards did not show that they had voted.

President Duarte has been Reagan's democratic window-dressing for the last four years, but Roberto d'Aubuisson, the military leader, an admirer of Adolf Hitler, is the real powermaster. In Nicaragua, CIA collaborators and other security risks, are jailed, but in El Salvador political opponents, labor leaders, nuns, even an archbishop have been victims of the death squads, and not a single member of d'Aubuisson's death squads has ever been convicted.

Let's get out of El Salvador as the Russians are getting out of Afghanistan. And let's stop the CIA war against Nicaragua. Indeed, we should restore some measure of our honor by complying with the World Court order to pay reparations to the government of Nicaragua commensurate with the death, suffering and property damage we have inflicted on the people of that country. By complying with the World Court order we would also honor U.S. law (see Article VI, U.S. Constitution).

Alan Rhodes
Willoughby, Ohio

Self-determination

BERNARD BRODSKY (LETTERS, MAY 11) MAKES some comments that themselves call for comment. My own comments shall be made in the same order as were his.

First, let us dispose of Jeane Kirkpatrick. Her support for the government of Israel is motivated only by that government's predictable support for the government in Washington, D.C., and that, in turn, by the enormous sums of money given (not lent) by Washington to Jerusalem, partially in payment for dirty work that Washington wants done but, for whatever reason, is not prepared to do for itself. If Israel did an about-face, Kirkpatrick's enthusiasm for its policies would evaporate.

Where the "Palestine question" is concerned, no one, Brodsky included, gives heed to the matter of self-determination. Until the end of the Most Senseless War in History, Palestine was under the rule of Turkish sultans who never asked the Palestinians, Arabs (i.e., speaking Arabic as a mother tongue) in their majority, whether or not they chose to be governed by the Turks. Turkey, having joined the wrong side of the war, lost her empire, Palestine included, to the League of Nations, which, without consulting the Palestinians, mandated the latter to the British, who themselves did not consult the Palestinians. One Briton, Lord Balfour, again without consulting the

Palestinians, declared that their country was to be a Jewish homeland. Nice and legal, but just?

Brodsky is right, on the other hand, on his last major point. I have two Arab friends, one of Christian background, the other of Moslem. When I said to them that I, if I were an Arab with neither money nor influential friends, would much rather live under Israeli rule, with all its injustices, than under any Arab government, they agreed with me, and one of them is Palestinian. Injustice is injustice, however. What other name would one give to a state of affairs in which there is one set of laws for Jews, another for non-Jews, to a state of affairs in which non-Jewish civilians are tried by Jewish military courts from whose judgments there is no appeal?

Mrs. Kirkpatrick, meet Mr. Brodsky. You deserve each other.

Leon Hurvitz
Vancouver, British Columbia

Correction

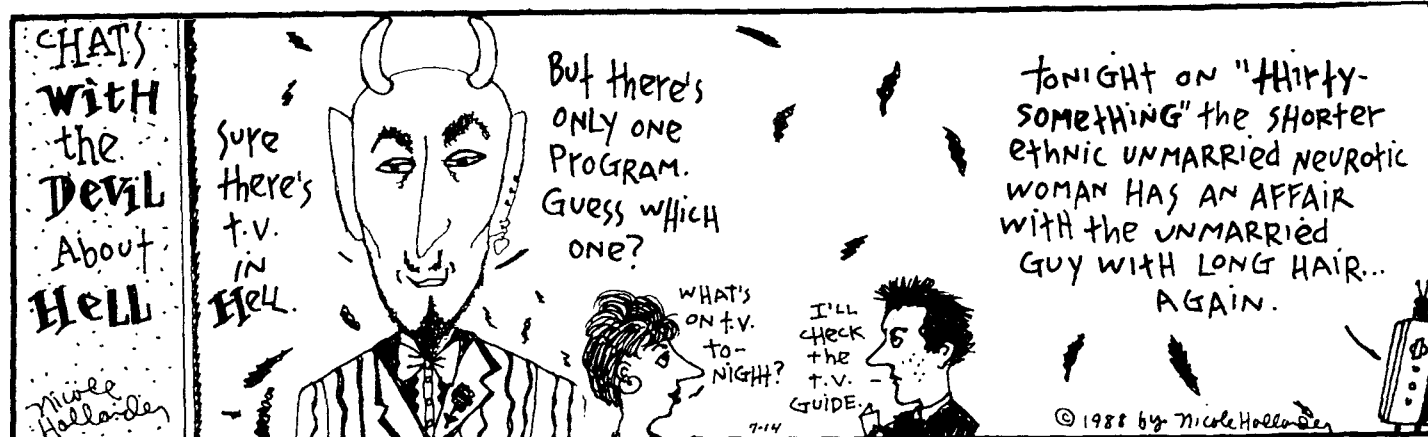
MY MAY 11 ARTICLE ON PERESTROIKA WAS RETITLED and edited without my permission in a manner that obscured some fundamental aspects of current Soviet reforms:

It is important to be clear that both Michail Gorbachov and the humblest of Soviet citizens take for granted a range of welfare guarantees that are beyond the dreams of most lower-income Americans. To take only the most obvious examples: security against homelessness and a technologically backward but accessible health-care system in the Soviet Union stand in sharp contrast to a terrifying insecurity, and the maldistribution of technologically superior health care in the U.S. It is only within the context of a 70-year history of such Soviet priorities that we can understand why even radical "free market" economists like Nikolai Shmelev call for a program of economic efficiency and economic justice. We need to understand that the Soviet Union is a place where the health, basic livelihood and educational opportunity of its citizens are, on a minimum level, guaranteed. As their reformers struggle to loosen deeply entrenched political, cultural and economic restrictions, they continue to take it for granted that economic policy is a question of social welfare as well as increased productivity.

Esther Kingston-Mann
Boston, Mass.

Editor's note: We regret that cuts in Esther Kingston-Mann's piece were not cleared with her. All articles, however, are retitled in order to fill the space allocated for headlines.

SYLVIA



by Nicole Hollander

Gorbachov trod minefields at Soviet Communist Party conference

By Alexander Amerisov

THE 19TH CONFERENCE OF THE Communist Party of the Soviet Union, which began on June 28, is a watershed event in Soviet history. It will pave the way for either profound democratization of Soviet society, or anarchy, followed by neo-Stalinist reaction.

When Mikhail Gorbachov proposed the conference in January 1987, it was in an effort to go over the heads of the Party's Central Committee—which gave a green light to his economic and social reforms but blocked the radical political restructuring he proposed. It seemed a reasonable move at the time: Gorbachov's popularity was at an all-time high. When the conference actually got underway this month, however, Gorbachov's popularity was at an all-time low—severely damaged by the Boris Yeltsyn affair last November and the complete failure of the economic policies that Gorbachov calls *perestroika*.

Gorbachov's dismissal of his staunchest supporter, Boris Yeltsyn, has come to haunt him. Even in Moscow, in the country's largest and most important Communist Party organization, Gorbachov's closest friends and allies were not able to secure the status of conference delegates. That was a mind-boggling development, given that Gorbachov went on public record to announce that only the most fervent supporters of his reforms would be chosen as delegates.

Among the losers were academician Tatyana Zaslavskaya, one of Gorbachov's

key advisers on social policies; Yuri Afanasyev, a chief anti-Stalinist Soviet historian; Vitaly Korotich, editor of the largest Soviet weekly and Gorbachov's most dynamic supporter in the press; Fyodor Burlatsky, a brilliant journalist and one of the most visible supporters of Gorbachov's reforms as well as his personal friend and confidant; and many others. Because of their high visibility and prestige, all of them were selected almost unanimously as delegates at meetings of their primary party units, only to be blocked at the district level. Only with great difficulty were a few of these people later named as delegates from regions far from Moscow. None of this could have happened were Boris Yeltsyn still in charge of Moscow.

In addition to organizational problems facing Gorbachov at the conference, there is an even bigger problem that colors the entire proceedings—the three years of Gorbachov's rule so far have been a flop as far as a majority of the Soviet people are concerned.

Good intentions: Gorbachov's policies, which aim to reduce government interference in the economy—vital for Soviet society in the long run—have backfired, producing misery for the Soviet people rather than benefitting them. Wages are down. Prices are up. Shortages are even greater than under Brezhnev. Even sugar, of which the Soviet Union is the largest producer in the world, and which was never in short supply, is now rationed. During the nearly



four months I recently spent in the Soviet Union, only once was I able to buy fish—a commodity that had always been plentiful and cheap there.

In a country with no unemployment insurance, Gorbachov's badly thought-through "staff reduction" policies are inflicting great hardship on people. What's worse, a lay-off in the Soviet Union may mean not only a temporary loss of income, but the devastating loss of one's place on the waiting list for many of the vital necessities that are distributed through one's place of employment. Housing is one of them.

An old friend of mine, Uncle Vanya, a blue-collar worker who is over 50 and lives with his wife and four children in a one-room apartment without running water, toilet or shower, took his present job as a production worker because it offered him the opportunity to get a bigger apartment. That was eight years ago. Now he is faced with the possibility of a lay-off, a new job and a spot on the bottom of the waiting list for housing—another eight or more years' wait. "Bastard" is what he called Gorbachov.

The wife of another friend of mine took

a low-paying job as a technician in order to get their daughter placed in a kindergarten offered by that state-owned company. It was a year ago. Now she is laid off and looking for another job. Her husband asks: "Will we have to wait another year to get our daughter into kindergarten? She will be ready to go to regular school in one year."

Gorbachov is violating the social contract: the state pays people very little for their work, but takes upon itself the obligation to provide them with some vital services. Gorbachov wants the state to do less, but he gives people no more money to do it for themselves; a babysitter would have cost my friend almost as much as his wife makes. They can't live on his salary.

Things like that have allowed conservatives to come to this conference stressing the record of Gorbachov's policy failures and presenting themselves as the "true" defenders of the Soviet people.

Perestroika vs. glasnost: In May, sensing trouble, a group of outstanding Soviet intellectuals, including academician Andrei Sakharov, playwright Alexander Gelman, progressive *Novy Mir* editor Alexander Strelyanyi and others issued an open letter to Gorbachov begging him to postpone the conference until it could be "properly prepared." Nothing came of it. Although scaled back, the conference opened on schedule and promises little good. Its prospects improved somewhat by Ronald Reagan's recent trip to Moscow and Gorbachov's overtures to the Russian Orthodox Church.

A high-ranking editor of one of the leading Soviet dailies told me he felt that the conference would be "the beginning of the end of *glasnost* in the Soviet Union." He was urging his contributors to file as many controversial stories as possible right away. He could not be sure that he would be in a position to publish them after the conference. He may be gagged or out of his job.

What Gorbachov says he wants the conference to accomplish is to "give our *perestroika* its second wind," to alter the structure of the Soviet state so his "economic reforms don't get bogged down."

Last year, by letting Gorbachov go ahead with his economic experimentation while blocking his political demands, the conservatives in effect told Gorbachov: "Go ahead and see if you can fly the plane on empty." Like a reckless teenager, Gorbachov took off. Now, after a crash-landing, he comes back to the same people to ask for more fuel for his "boost phase" of reforms, as passengers, frightened of what may come yet, are less than enthusiastic.

For now, Gorbachov should forget about his social and economic experiments and use what remains of his prestige and popularity to push for genuine democratic reform—society and the economy will take care of themselves. In case the conference refuses to go along, Gorbachov must go to the people and call for a nationwide referendum. But the only policy the Soviet people are in a mood to support now is the policy conducted under the slogan, "Down with *perestroika*! Up with *glasnost* and democracy!" To succeed, economic reforms require a democratic mandate—or the imposition of neo-Stalinist tyranny. The conference will answer which one it will be. ■ Alexander Amerisov is editor of the *Soviet-American Review*. He writes regularly for *In These Times*.

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Perestroika aims to reduce government interference in the economy, but it has backfired, producing misery for the Soviet people. With wages down and prices up, Gorbachov has lost popular and party support.

Jane and Joan

Almost nothing in life requires more artful preparation than a public apology. People like listening to other people say they're sorry. It makes them feel both happy (because they themselves, at least for the time being, are not having to say they're sorry) and pleasantly humble (because they are participating in the act of self-abasement, at least by witnessing it).

Apologies can range from groveling self-abasement to what Nixon's adviser John Erlichman once called the "limited, hang-out" mode. Evangelists like to grovel, since it makes for better theater and highlights the profound mercy of the Savior, from whom all forgiveness flows, at least for Christians. Politicians prefer the more nuanced, limited expression of regret ("if there has been even the *appearance* of a conflict...").

Whatever Jane Fonda thought she was doing with Barbara Walters, most Americans, particularly those who did not watch the show, thought she was saying she was sorry she'd been against the Vietnam War, and that since she was speaking as a representative of what used to be called the Movement, there was now unanimity throughout the nation that the war was a good thing. This is the trouble with apologies. Once you start, people never let you stop.

I wish Fonda had not felt it expedient to issue her expression of regret, via La Walters, with ground rules so manifest that they should have been run as subtitles: W-E-A-R-E-N-O-T-G-O-I-N-G-T-O-T-A-L-K-A-B-O-U-T-T-O-M. Why not talk about Tom, whose political ambitions had at least something to do with the apology? The main trouble with the apology was that no one else was on hand to say, on behalf of the anti-war movement: "This was our struggle. Of course we feel sorry for death and injury wrought to Americans roped into a criminal enterprise. Our planes had no business to be flying over their country. Our troops had no right to set foot on their soil. The struggle of the Vietnamese remains one of the most valiant chapters of the century and has nothing to do with whatever the government of Vietnam may or may not be doing now."

I notice that no one is pressing Jane or Tom to apologize for their visit to an Israeli gun battery shelling Beirut during the invasion of 1982. On the other hand, Joan Baez—an earlier apologizer so far as Vietnam is concerned—has been exhibiting a spirit lacking in T&J. Baez recently did a one-week tour of Israel and in the course of two packed concerts ignored pressure from her Israeli promoters not to perform "Shooting and Crying," a Hebrew protest song about repression in the territories. When the recording of the concert was broadcast by the military radio station, the song was omitted. In between concerts, Baez went to the Occupied Territories and met with Palestinian and Israeli peace groups. During her final evening in Israel she sang at a torchlight vigil outside a military prison housing *Yesh Gvul* members who refuse to serve in the Occupied Territories. The vigil was attacked by thugs from Meir Kahane's fascist *Kaoh* movement, but the *Yesh Gvul* supporters fought them off. Baez then held a special concert in support of the *Yesh Gvul* movement, in which a number of leading Israeli artists—both Jews and Arabs—took part.

Footnote: Hayden is supposedly going to fly a planeload of bratpackers to the Demo-

ASHES & DIAMONDS

By Alexander Cockburn

cratic convention in Atlanta in mid-July, a plan viewed with reserve by the Dukakoids. It makes one feel quite nostalgic for that anti-aircraft gun emplacement visited by Jane.

Oiling Shales

Not the least diverting aspect of Ed Joyce's book *Prime Times, Bad Times* is its disclosure of the obsessive interest network executives pay to their press. For those unfamiliar with Joyce I should first say that he is a former president of CBS News who turned early retirement to good use by pissing on the trough in which once he wallowed. Most of its several hundred pages form a vendetta against his erstwhile partner in crime, Van Gordon Sauter, another CBS executive. It is an instructive footnote on the decline of the civilization and humane values.

It turns out that a prime daily activity of these highly paid network functionaries was conferring with TV critics (usually on an off-the-record basis), on whom they would endeavor to plant information advancing their own interests and discrediting those of their enemies. Things seem to have become real to them, in any intellectually substantive sense, only when they were advertised in the trade papers or in columns in the *Los Angeles Times*, the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*.

Of these last three newspapers, the TV critic of the *Washington Post*, Tom Shales, was the object of unremitting stroking by Joyce and his colleagues, not the least among them Joyce's successor as president of CBS News, Howard Stringer. During the first of what are evidently carefully calculated references to Shales, Joyce recalls the

various concerns when trying to decide whether to promote the English-born Stringer to be executive vice president of CBS News.

"By far my biggest reservation was the absolute delight Howard took in the sharing and soliciting of each day's bumper crop of CBS factoids. If CBS News had long ago developed rumoring to assembly-line perfection, Howard had become the model worker. In his years at *CBS Reports*, Howard had craftily concluded that while Nielson seldom awards a winning rating to a documentary, another rating system takes place in the television columns of major newspapers. Over the years he'd become a friendly source of information for writers such as Tom Shales of the *Washington Post*.... There were times when this was beneficial, but it could be worrisome to read a Shales article, see some bit of what had been confidential information, and wonder if Howard had provided it in an attempt at ingratiating."

Having set the scene, Joyce moves to serious business 24 pages later. He reports that he and Stringer were discussing the likely reception of the Moyers/Kuralt show, *Crossroads*:

"There were such great expectations for *American Parade*,' Stringer says to Joyce. 'I don't think we can count on another rave from Shales.'"

"Shales had given *American Parade* a glowing and, as far as we were concerned, undeserved review, going so far as to write

that "if *American Parade* doesn't succeed, we may as well abandon prime time as if it were a ravaged slum, one so terminal that urban renewal is out of the question."

"He'll be afraid to go out on a limb again," Howard said.

"I didn't know it at the time, but Howard had even hired a young man who was a friend of Shales to be a producer in Washington for the *Morning News*. I'd asked Howard about the wisdom of hiring a producer with no television experience, but had accepted his explanation that the young man's background as staff assistant to a U.S. senator would help in setting up the interviews the broadcast felt it needed for Diane Sawyer."

This seems to suggest a level of mutual back-scratching between Stringer and Shales bordering on indecency. Apparently Shales' chum eventually left CBS to go to college and some malign souls say that Shales' view of CBS productions became more jaundiced forthwith. I called the *Washington Post* to get Shales' recollection of all this. He says he has friends at CBS, including the one mentioned by Joyce, but that he, Shales, did not intervene with Stringer and "cannot understand the motive for Joyce's description. He seems to associate me with the Stringer regime, but I've kept my independence."

Joyce has almost nothing to say about one of Shales' opposite numbers at the *New York Times*, the highly conservative John Corry, but no doubt the network executives were studying him with equal attention and pondering all possible blandishments. Corry's wife is an active Republican and has been a super-bureaucrat in public television.

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BIOGRAPHY

The Broadway cast of *Streetcar*: Karl Malden, Kim Stanley, Elia Kazan, Marlon Brando and Vivien Leigh.

Elia Kazan: a stool pigeon named desire

A Life

By Elia Kazan
Alfred A. Knopf, 848 pp., \$24.95

By Walter Bernstein

ONCE, NOT LONG AGO, I SAT IN the office of a successful Hollywood producer, waiting for him to arrive for a story conference. He had been detained at his analyst. He arrived finally, bounding exuberantly into the room, beaming. "Guess what I just found out!" he cried in a voice full of delight and surprise. "I'm not a shit!" Actually, he was a shit, only now he didn't think so. This left him in a tiny minority, but he was content. His analyst had cleared him.

With Elia Kazan, a man of considerable energy and appetite, it took two analysts. The first sanctified his naming eight people as Communists when he testified before the House Un-American Activities Committee in 1952. The second helped him get rid of whatever residual guilt remained since that time, which had accumulated within him as an indigestible psychic lump.

Suspect analysis: With the help of analyst No. 2, Kazan was able to aspirate this potential malignancy, dissolving it into justifiable anger at those who had shunned or exoriated him for his testimony. The problem was that he had not been selfish enough. "People had been complaining for years that I've remained silent in the face of intolerable provocations," he writes. These provocations do not seem to have cost him work, money or fame, unlike those he named. The doors he wanted open to him remained open. Some friends, none of them close (he is not a man with close friends), never spoke to him again. He got

several nasty letters.

But there are no tolerable provocations to this hot-blooded Anatolian. The chip is always on the shoulder, the (unuttered) dare on the lips. Victimization is just around the corner. He is always dodging beanballs. Now, in this fascinating, tasteless, self-congratulatory, headlong orgy of confession, revelation and gossip, Kazan has his turn at the plate. It takes him 825 pages (plus index) before he reluctantly lays down his bat.

Which is more than he had been able to do in life. His book is a chronicle of compulsive rutting. Married first to Molly Day Thacher, a smart and formidable woman with impeccable WASP credentials, and then to Barbara Loden, the actress-film director, he seems to have viewed marriage as a kind of trampoline from which he could bounce to any woman he wanted. And he wanted them all.

No woman is safe from him, especially married women. He delights in cuckolding. His own wife, like his mother, is a saint. The sexism is dazzling. He takes pliant women in the backs of taxicabs, in alleyways, dressing rooms, hotels, motels, screening rooms. There is rarely any sense that another person is involved and he dismisses the idea, even when an actress succumbs to him as director, that he is exploiting anyone. "Most men of imagination and passion in the arts," he writes, "tend to use their power over young women...to the end of fucking them." He calls this "life-loving and inevitable." It is not the only time he confuses life with self.

His sense of injustice was formed early; he was a Greek born in Turkey, his father a rug merchant who brought his family to America when

Kazan was a child. The young Elia went to Williams and then to the Yale School of Drama. Afterward, he acted and directed with the left-wing theater in New York. He joined the Communist Party, but left after two years when a Party official from Detroit tried to straighten him out for too much original thought.

Feeling for the underdog: He was never very political, anyway, but he had a feeling for the underdog. Then he joined the Group Theater, where his character acting was memorable. He was electric on stage. No one who saw him in *Waiting for Lefty* or in *Golden Boy* as the gangster Eddie Fuselli has ever forgotten him. Many people thought him one of the most attractive men they had ever met, and certainly the most seductive. This was not the opinion he had of himself. A friend tells of standing on a corner with Kazan when they were both young, watching a pair of girls eye them from across the street. "You know what they're saying?" Kazan told his friend. "Look at those two funny-looking little Jews." Kazan was not Jewish, but he knew an epithet when he heard one, even if nobody said it.

When he hit the Broadway stage as a director, he was an instant success. Among other plays he directed *Death of a Salesman* and *A Streetcar Named Desire*. When he moved to films he won an Oscar for *Gentleman's Agreement*. By the early '50s he was the hottest director in America. Then the committee called him. He gave them what they wanted, followed by an ad in the *New York Times* to justify himself. It was urged by his agents, the William Morris agency, and written by his wife and does not appear in the book. In it, he claims to have been misguided in remaining true to old friends and

beliefs. Secrecy serves the Communists. The committee has a right to investigate subversion. He values peace when it is not bought at the price of fundamental decencies. It goes on like that.

Whether Kazan believed any of this is open to question. He is forever confessing his duplicity, deviousness and cowardice. In his mind, though, these are only psychological flaws; venial sins, not mortal. And shared by all of us. I may be rotten, he keeps saying, but there's nothing in me that isn't in you. It is a technique with limited mileage. Kazan was too smart not to know who was using him and for what purpose. But there was a choice to be

A fascinating orgy of confession and gossip.

made here between what was represented by his employer, Spyros Skouras, head of Twentieth Century-Fox, and his friend, Arthur Miller. As an unfriendly witness, he would no longer have worked in Hollywood, but blacklisted directors such as Joseph Losey, Jules Dassin and John Berry had already gone to Europe and were directing films there.

Kazan still could have worked on Broadway where, principally for economic reasons, the blacklist was porous. But work was not the issue; acceptance was. As Kazan writes: "I had a need to get along by pleasing authority figures, those in power." These include the Communist Party, the Group Theater and his wife, but not congressional committees or studio heads.

Seeing Red: By now the ever-present sense of injustice was being

put where it felt best—on the Reds. He sees the fine hand of the Party everywhere. When Arthur Miller pulled his waterfront screenplay *The Hook* away from Columbia Pictures because they wanted to turn the gangsters into Communists, Kazan saw the Party's influence on Miller. When Gabriel Figueroa, the great Mexican cameraman, refused cooperation in Mexico on *Viva Zapata!*, asking wryly: How would you like Mexicans in Illinois filming the life of Lincoln in Spanish with a Mexican actor? all Kazan saw was an obvious Party functionary at Figueroa's side. He directs a movie from his son's screenplay; scattered boos are heard; but Kazan is prepared, having seen recognizable old lefties entering the theater.

It is a streak of political paranoia especially attractive to Hollywood. The head of Paramount Pictures many years ago, a courtly Southern gentleman named Y. Frank Freeman, used to speak about how he could have settled a certain strike of technicians by simply talking to his boys on the picket line, but Russian-looking men kept interfering. Who knows the extent of the Party's vengeance? When Kazan leaves town after his testimony, he hires a bodyguard to protect his family. Later, he dines with a gangster who has testified against fellow gangsters and who now eats with a gun on the table. There is the shock of recognition; Kazan knows what this man and his family are going through. It is then that he determines he must make *On the Waterfront*, whatever the obstacles. It will be the film that "justifies my informing." The equation is clear: Party equals mob. Informing on Communists is no different from ratting on gangsters.

But he still has to prove he *really* means it. Just as others who cooperated were also instructed to join right-wing slates in their unions, so it was hinted to Kazan that it wouldn't hurt to direct a nice little anti-Communist film. So he is off to Germany to direct *Man on a Tightrope*, about a circus escaping from behind the Iron Curtain. He doesn't like the picture very much. The politics are fine, but somehow the personal story doesn't quite work. He does love his crew, "Nazis though many of them had been." He hires Adolphe Menjou, "who was on the left-sponsored blacklist as Freddie [March] was on the right wing's list." Menjou can work and March has trouble, but a list, after all, is still a list.

Gonads on overtime: Through all this, he still considers himself a man of the left. The nurturing past still has its hooks in him. "Socialism! Yes!" he cries out. He is glad Ronnie brought inflation down, but wouldn't have voted for him. He yearns for the impossible—"to be a lefty, a radical, certainly a socialist, but also loyal and loving to the USA." He mourns that "money, ambition and

rivalry had deprived me of brotherhood."

But not sisterhood; the gonads stay on overdrive. His marriage breaks up; he marries his mistress, Barbara Loden, with whom he has had a child; that breaks up. Both wives die and he wonders if he was responsible in some way for their deaths. On a trip to Greece, he decides to change his life and become a writer. His first book, a *roman-à-clef* called *The Arrangement*, becomes a best seller. He goes on to

write the sort of novels he would earlier have scorned to direct.

And yet, in this immodest book, he is too modest about himself as a director. He was better than he says he was, particularly for the stage. He claims no credit for Brando's famous performances in *Streetcar* and *On the Waterfront*, but it is no accident that this unruly acting genius was never better than under Kazan's direction. He is perceptive about other people's faults, properly skewering Lee Strasberg and knowing that in-

forming would destroy Odets, but not Kazan. He is acute about acting, about plays if not films, although he says little revealing about his own work. He is dumb about screenwriting, seeing it only as dialogue.

And there are interesting omissions. He hardly talks about Barbara Loden's lovely film, *Wanda*, which went deeper than most of his films. His children are never personalized and so what they mean to him is never clear. There is no mention of Martin Ritt, a good friend at one time,

and no recognition that Ritt was involved with Kazan in starting the Actor's Studio. There is no remorse about the damage he did to the people he named; they are non-persons.

There is feeling to this life, there is strong appetite and there is some very good work. But there is no moral center. Early in the book, when young, he constructs a monologue to hurl at a hostile world. "Let it go, your true nature. Yes, if I'm dirt, I'm dirt, and I'll do what I

want to do, even if it's not okay—perfect—approved...let them practice forbearance, my moral superiors. I've had it with forbearance. Let them judge and be damned. If I'm dirt, I'm dirt. Okay?"

He is not dirt; no one is. But he soiled himself, and the stain remains. ■

Walter Bernstein is a screenwriter who was blacklisted in the '50s. His credits include *Fail-Safe*, *Semi-Tough*, *The Front* and *All the King's Men*.

Author probes the astronomical debt and the big bank theory

A Fate Worse than Debt

By Susan George
Grove Press, 304 pp., \$17.95

By James North

IN 1973, FAMINE SWEEPED SUB-SAHARAN Africa. The Sahelian tragedy gave another boost to the "overpopulation thesis"—to the idea, shared by many people ranging from conservatives to certain types of ecologists, that the world already is overpopulated relative to the food supply. One of the most valuable and important correctives to this simple-minded view was Susan George's passionate *How the Other Half Dies*. George showed convincingly that the world produced more than enough food, but that hundreds of millions of people are too poor to buy it. She skillfully explained how the world agricultural system responds to money instead of to human need; even as poor Africans starved, some of their countries continued to produce beef and peanuts for export.

Susan George has now turned her attention to the world debt crisis, to the \$1 trillion the Third World owes to the West. Her book has all the characteristics of her previous work: it is thorough, persuasive, passionate and clearly written. She has done some remarkably original work in trying to show that the crisis is so global that it constitutes something new in history. And she provides innovative, provocative suggestions about how a disaster that has meant misery for hundreds of millions of people (not all of them in the poor countries), has also, paradoxically, provided an opportunity to start restructuring the world economy more democratically.

High-stakes charades: George begins with a precise, readable account of the origins of the crisis. Apologists for the West have long argued that the major cause of the crisis was the two oil price hikes of the '70s. Poor countries without oil had to borrow to cover their greatly increased energy bills. But George estimates that at most one-quarter of the debt can be attributed to the oil-price hikes. Less is generally said about arms sales, which account for

another 20 percent or so of the \$1 trillion. And still less is said about projects like the \$2.1 billion Morong nuclear power plant in the Philippines. Critics have charged that Westinghouse paid Ferdinand Marcos \$80 million in "commissions" to win the construction contract. The plant is considered unsafe and it will never open, but the Filipino people have to repay the debt.

In the West, the shock of Mexico's near-default in August 1982 has been succeeded by the policy of "muddling through." The debtors announce they cannot make their payments on time; the big banks cajole and threaten; in the end, a "rescheduling" stretches out some payments and maintains the charade that the debt can be fully repaid. What is interesting in all this is the Western governments' role in the process. Paul Volcker spent much of his time when he was chairman of the Federal Reserve trying to manage the debt crisis; James Baker, the secretary of the treasury, even devised a plan (which was never implemented) to coordinate the responses of the big banks.

Any honest free-marketeer should have been in the front row heckling

at this state interference in private concerns. Instead there was silence. George has coolly observed this arrangement and decided that there is

ECONOMICS

a new development in the world economy—that the debt crisis has spurred into existence an entity she has dubbed "the Consortium." She explains: "Consortium members—lender-nation governments, banks, international agencies—share (mostly) common interests and therefore pursue similar goals. They

Persuasive, passionate and clearly written.

don't conspire but they do consult, and at the top to upper-middle levels the members all know each other."

Consolidating control: This degree of concentration partly explains why the debtor nations have not formed the alliance that everyone expected. There is a cartel in the debt crisis, but it has not been formed by the debtors. It is rather

the Consortium that has gotten together. During the '30s debt crisis, Latin American countries repudiated their debts and got away with it. But back then, as George explains, those obligations were in the form of individual government bonds, owned by thousands of investors scattered around the world. This time, nine big money-center banks hold much of the debt, and when they talk Paul Volcker and James Baker listen. Paradoxically, the world economy is bigger and more interconnected than ever, yet fewer people help set its course.

But the debt crisis is not merely academic and George documents the effects of the disaster on ordinary people. As the poor countries use their limited export earnings to pay their debts, they cut back on health and education. U.N. agencies report that more infants are dying, and fewer children are literate. Paulo Evaristo Arns, the cardinal of Sao Paulo, Brazil, has said, "We have already reimbursed the debt, once or twice over, considering the interest paid. We must stop giving the blood and misery of our people to pay the First World."

Yet George does not believe the debt should be simply cancelled. She explains that unconditional write-offs would help dictators like Augusto Pinochet of Chile and Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire, "the most repressive, profligate and corrupt regimes that borrowed the most for the worst

reasons...." Little or none of the money would get to the people who really need it.

A 3-D solution: Instead she proposes an arrangement that she would call "the 3-D solution: debt, development and democracy." She would begin in Africa, where the debt burden is proportionately greatest and where most of it is "public"—owed to Western governments and agencies. The debtor nations would repay into development funds intended for their own people. As they repaid, their external debts would be reduced by corresponding amounts. In George's scheme Third World governments would not have exclusive control over these funds. Non-governmental organizations—movements of the rural poor, of women—would have a decisive voice in how the money would be spent.

She also proposes that the African nations could repay part of their debts "in kind"—by protecting genetic species, reforestation, improvement of food- and water-storage facilities. She then suggests a variant of 3-D for Latin America.

George's chapter on "ecocide" explains how the pressures to repay the debt are destroying the tropical rain forests and spreading the world's deserts. One chilling estimate suggests that 15 to 20 percent of the world's plant and animal species could become extinct by the year 2000. This squandering represents the loss of countless potential seed varieties, medications and energy sources.

Only political pressures from the West could force fundamental policy changes. And at present, widespread pressure on an issue that so few people understand seems utopian. But George shows that there are opportunities. American corporations have lost business because the Third World repays the banks instead of importing Caterpillar tractors; one congressional study has shown that more than one million U.S. jobs have been eliminated due to lost opportunities in Latin America alone. George suggests that the Third World start to tell America: we'll buy \$X million from Caterpillar if you reduce our debt by \$Y million. In such a scenario, labor and company lobbyists in Washington would instantly be plotting against the big banks over expense-account lunches. ■

James North is the author of *Freedom Rising*, an account of southern Africa based on his four years there.



Points of departure

P.O.V.
Public Television Service

By Pat Aufderheide

PO.V., A 10-WEEK SERIES OF 12 DOCUMENTARIES airing on most public TV stations from early July through September, is short for "point of view."

"Point of view" is what independent film and TV producers are proud to have. "Point of view" is also the element that makes independents voices of that "diversity-in-a-pluralist-society" to which public TV supposedly subscribes.

But all too often in public TV, "point of view" is seen as a euphemism for "bias." Public TV programmers, after all, have several monkeys on their backs: legislators who scrutinize "balance" at funding time; subscribers whose own opinions are never biased but whose pocketbooks are sensitive to bias in others; and corporations and foundations, which typically don't want to link their names with controversy.

That may be one reason why the 12 documentaries shown in *P.O.V.* have never before been seen on public TV. Never—even though you might swear you have seen some of them there. There are long-famous ones, like *Best Boy*, Ira Wohl's Oscar-winning feature about a retarded man learning to live on his own; and *Gates of Heaven*, the critically-



Louie Bluie, one of 12 documentaries in a new series on public TV.

heralded first feature by Errol Morris, which probes the bizarre normality of pet cemetery owners and users. And there are the newly famous, such as the debut film, *American Tongues*, a journey through America by way of its many regional dialects, guided by directors Louis Alvarez and Andrew Kolker; and *Louie Bluie*, Terry Swigoff's portrait of the leader of the last black string band in the U.S.

These all seem like perfect films

for public TV, even for pledge week, when the station presumably tries to show viewers why it's worthwhile paying for something they get free anyway. These films may be exceptional, unusual and personal, but they're not, uh, controversial.

Hot topics: That's not true of everything in the series. Some films overtly engage controversy, such as Deborah Shaffer's *Fire from the Mountain*, which vigorously waves the flag for Sandinista-run Nicaragua.

gua. *Las Madres: The Mothers of Plaza de Mayo*, by Susan Munoz and Lourdes Portillo, puts the mothers of disappeared children and grandchildren, victims of Argentine terror during the recently-ended military regime, on center stage. Less partisan, but also openly political, is *The Good Fight*, by Noel Buckner, Mary Dore and Sam Sills. It's a sympathetic but not sentimental look at leftists, many of them Communist Party

FILM

members, who went to fight against fascism in the Spanish Civil War.

Other films are at least "sensitive" in terms of offending or baffling some viewers, and typical of the independent documentary movement of the late '60s and '70s, which expanded the definition of political subject matter. *Rate It "X"*, by Lucy Winer and Paula de Koenigsberg, is a sharp, darkly funny feminist take on pornography. Tina DiFeliciano's *Living with AIDS* focuses on a dying 22-year-old man, and on a subject that makes many viewers deeply uncomfortable. Michal Aviad's *Acting Our Age* brings the subject of women's aging out of the closet.

Troublemakers: The *P.O.V.* series was produced by documentary filmmaker Marc N. Weiss for the same public TV station consortium that produces *American Playhouse*; most of the funding came from outside public TV, especially from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. The series, by choosing films made in recent years, benefits

from a sunnier period of documentary filmmaking, before most of the funding sources in public TV and in federal agencies choked down to a trickle.

The fact that none of these films has aired before also reveals public TV's reluctance to invest in, promote or exhibit independent work.

Some producers even feared this series would be used by public TV officials as proof that public TV does use independent work and therefore need not do more. Congress has recently noticed (thanks to independents) how little of public TV's funds go into production, and how few of America's diverse voices get on the air. And legislators have urged public TV officials—on pain of passing legislation instead—to negotiate with independents a separate program-producing fund for independent work. Public TV administrators have welcomed this with as much enthusiasm as if they'd discovered poison ivy at a garden party.

Independents probably don't need to worry. There's little chance that any informed viewer will mistake *P.O.V.* for business-as-usual public TV. It's a raucous, contentious collection, regularly informative but rarely so in a way that looks familiar to viewers of nature programs or *Frontline* documentaries. And its very existence as a retrospective, acquired (rather than sponsored) series, is a statement about what's usually missing.

©1988 Pat Aufderheide
(Viewers' guides for the series are available; call 1-800-338-5252 for more information.)

Dancing in the Dark
Sonny Rollins
Milestone Records

By Dean Robbins

DANCING IN THE DARK FINDS SONNY Rollins in a familiar state of confusion. The album seems like the work of two saxophonists, one immature and the other practically immortal. On the title cut he sounds the kind of titanic blast (like Walt Whitman's "barbaric yawp") that revels in its own vitality. He doesn't so much ride the beat as draw sheer energy from the rhythm section, springing himself into a loopy orbit of his own.

But on "Just Once," as the bass burbles and the Fender Rhodes twinkles stupidly, his mind turns to mush. He's so uncommitted that he doesn't even bother to finish his chorus before the droopy fadeout.

It's a baffling juxtaposition, but I'm reluctant to knock it. In an Olympian figure like Rollins confusion is an intriguing—even inspiring—quality. And for all its missteps, *Dancing in the Dark* is far from forgettable. With its mixture of inspiration and inanity, it stands as a tantalizing emblem of Rollins' 40 years in jazz.

Erratic Olympian Rollins blows hot and cold

The first hint that Rollins was as mixed up as the next guy came at just about the time he seemed most confident. He mastered the bebop game at an early age (in 1949, just shy of 19, he was keeping up with

JAZZ

Bud Powell and Fats Navarro), and in the mid-'50s he broke new ground by stretching coherent solos over unprecedented lengths. He reached a creative peak in the late '50s with albums like *Saxophone Colossus*.

To the bridge: But at the apex of success, Sonny Rollins was confused. He began to suspect he wasn't really the Saxophone Colossus everyone called him. So he dropped out of jazz for two years to practice and meditate. He hung out on New York's Williamsburg Bridge, blowing solos to the sky in an attempt to rejuvenate himself.

When Rollins returned to the scene in 1961 he was newly inspired, nudging toward the avant-garde

with the abstract forays of *The Bridge*. He didn't hit a creative impasse until the end of the decade, when he suspected he was leaving his audience in the dust. To clear his mind he hunkered down in an Indian ashram, studied yoga and Zen, and at one point even gave up the horn for almost two years.

In 1971 Rollins began a new phase of his career—the most bewildering one to date. He hired a batch of young musicians and hopped on the fusion bandwagon, producing albums that ranged from uneven, to unlistenable.

Rollins has produced some brilliant work in the '80s (especially last year's epic *G-Man*), but he's still prey to self-doubt. During his rather nervous New York solo concert in 1985 he was heard to mutter, "What more can I possibly play?"

It's a good question, and one that puts *Dancing in the Dark* in proper perspective. After producing an album like *G-Man*—at the age of 56—what more should Rollins be ex-

pected to do? Few of his peers sustained inspiration over such a long career: not John Coltrane or Charlie Parker, who checked out early, or Lester Young, who gave way to drink and redundancy. Sure, Rollins isn't always on, but the mere fact that he's still seeking—and sometimes delivering—masterpieces should make listeners tolerant of his quandaries.

Dancing in the Dark is a minor work, but it contains the spark that could ignite it into another *G-Man*.

Rollins, in striving for simplicity, accidentally lulls himself to sleep sometimes, but on "O.T.Y.O.G.," "Allison" and "Duke of Iron," he strikes a good compromise between his '60s esoterica and '70s

Saxophonist Sonny Rollins makes his peace with simplicity without sacrificing his virtuosity or sardonic wit.

juvenilia.

"O.T.Y.O.G.," in which the rhythm section shakes off its lethargy, is especially compelling. Rollins solos in eight-bar units, playing (or merely implying) a three-note motif at the end of each cadence. In between the tags he dances briefly on top of the beat and then shoots off in his own direction, corkscrewing through the chords and finally bottoming out in a rude blat. He makes his peace with simplicity without sacrificing his virtuosity or sardonic wit.

On "Dancing in the Dark," however, he discards simplicity altogether. Rollins is impatient and inspired: he wraps long phrases around the melody, festooning it with squeaks and honks. And yet, as on his best improvisations, he doesn't let it disappear completely. He neatly stitches it right into the flowing fabric of his solo.

Rollins' restlessness on "Dancing in the Dark" is the kind that attends the search for self-discovery. It may occasionally lead to confusion, but it's an unmistakable sign of life—and a guarantee that Sonny Rollins' story is far from over.

Dean Robbins is arts editor of the Madison, Wisc., weekly *Isthmus*.

Rambo III
Directed by Sylvester Stallone

By William Gibson

THREE YEARS AGO, *MAD* MAGAZINE'S satire on *Rambo: First Blood Part II* closed with a warning: "Not the End...*Dumbo: Beirut Part II, Dumbo: Central America Part IV, Dumbo: Libya Part V, etc., etc., etc.*" They got the countries wrong, but Rambo is indeed back. Opening Memorial Day weekend, *Rambo III* grossed more than \$2 million during its first week and is well on its way to covering Sylvester's Stallone's \$90 million production costs.

The first half hour of *Rambo III* is comfortably familiar. Still in Thailand, where *Part II* left him, Rambo works as a carpenter and metal worker for Buddhist monks. He helps them financially by fighting in a brutal martial arts game. In a scene straight from *The Deer Hunter*, the camera pans around the smoky room, showing Asians screaming, cheering and betting fistfuls of money as Rambo pounds his opponent to the ground.

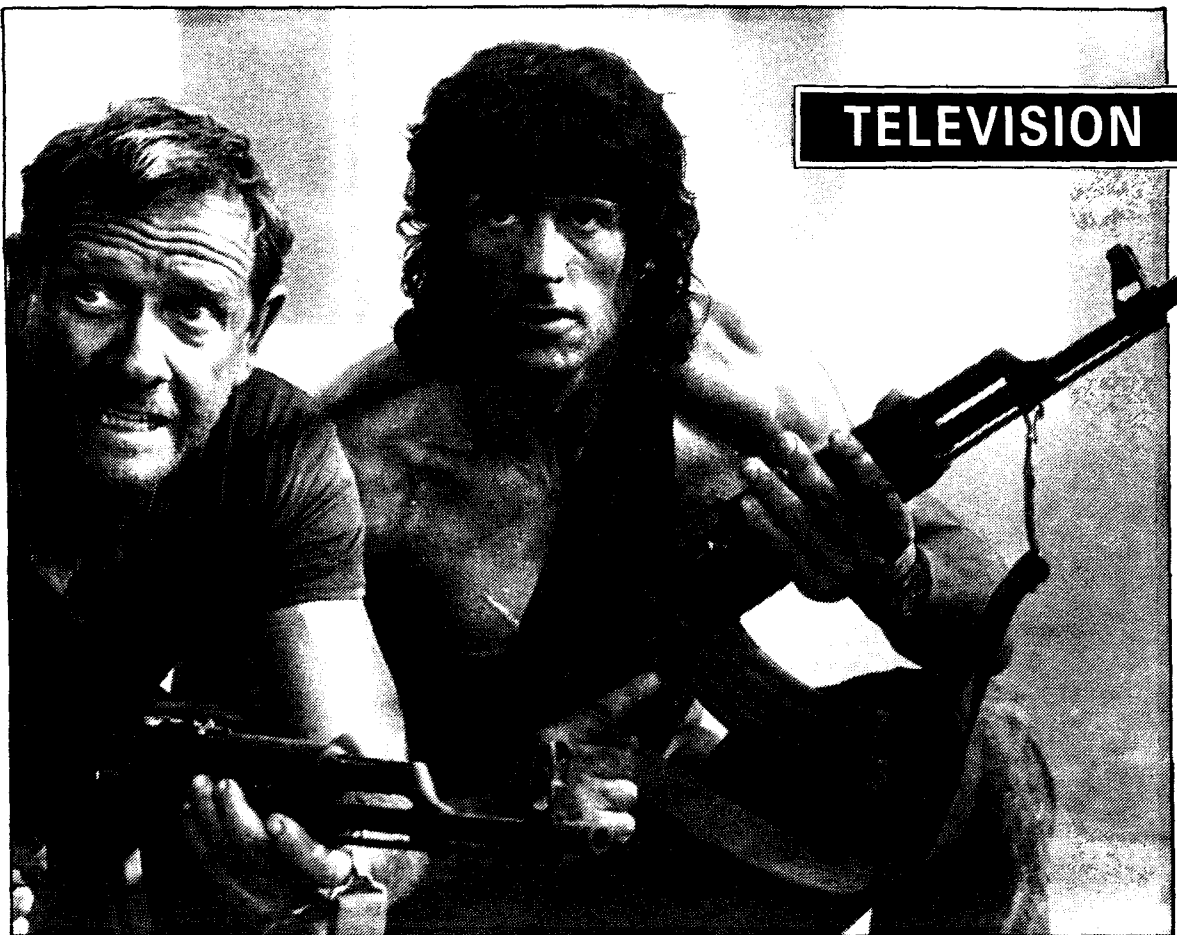
This idyllic life is threatened by the return of Rambo's warrior "father," U.S. Army Special Forces Col. Samuel Trautman (played again by Richard Crenna). Although the Afghanistan mujahedeen have generally succeeded in pushing back the Soviet forces, there is still one province that the Soviets completely dominate. Trautman wants Rambo to accompany him "to investigate the problem."

Rambo wimps out: Rambo refuses, declaring, "I put in my time. My war is over." Trautman tells him, "You are a full-blooded combat soldier. That's what you are. You're always going to be tearing at yourself until you come to terms with what you are." Rambo's refusal to "come full circle" is a denial of his true calling.

Trautman crosses into Afghanistan and is immediately captured by the wicked Russian Col. Zaysan. Rambo gets the bad news from the Bangkok CIA chief and, predictably, volunteers to go after "Dad." When told that he cannot expect any aid if caught or hurt, Rambo merely shrugs, "I'm used to it." And so is the audience. Thus far *Rambo III* is the same old '80s war movie.

But as Rambo crosses the border on horseback to rendezvous with the Afghan rebels, the film cuts to a Russian fort reminiscent of the cavalry forts in old Western films. Inside, Col. Trautman delivers an extraordinarily radical political speech to Col. Zaysan: "Every day your war machine loses ground to a bunch of poorly armed and poorly equipped fighters. They've never been defeated. They'd rather die than be slaves to an invading army. We tried—we had our Vietnam and now you're going to have yours."

It's a brief speech, but for those viewers who miss the point, the movie makes the same analogy



Richard Crenna and Sylvester Stallone may be getting soft, but they've still got flex appeal.

Rambo goes soft: the guns of Sly Stallone

using film images. Soon after Rambo arrives in the Afghan village it is attacked by Col. Zaysan's helicopters. The Mi-24 gunships strafe with machine guns and rockets. Men, women, children and horses are all ripped apart as the helicopters press their attack. It visually resembles the U.S. Army air cavalry attack on the Vietnamese village in *Apocalypse Now*.

Rambo the red man: The Soviet assault has connotations of an old Western cavalry attack on an Indian village. The country looks like the American West and the Afghans are portrayed as warrior tribes fighting on horseback, just like American Indians. Earlier films have established that Rambo is from Arizona and is of half-German, half-Indian descent. In *Rambo III*, evidence of his "Indian" heritage is present in virtually every scene: Rambo has long hair, wears a headband and fights bare-chested with a bow and arrow and a large knife. Politically, *Rambo III* asserts that morality is on the side of the natives and that invaders—be they Russian or American, are morally wrong.

Rambo III unexpectedly challenges the genre conventions of most '80s action-adventure films. Starting with *Uncommon Valor* in 1983, scores of war movies have presented Vietnam veterans who fight a second, victorious war either in a return to Vietnam or on a new battleground in another Third World country. These films typically present the conservative analysis of Vietnam, blaming U.S. defeat on what the Joint Chiefs of Staff called "self-imposed restraints."

Such films portray cowardly politicians who refuse to "unleash" the American warriors' full power. One of the first lines in *Rambo: First Blood Part II* has Rambo asking Trautman, "Do we get to win this time?" The question presumes that the U.S. military could have won the Vietnam War but was prohibited from doing so by political elites. *Rambo II* was framed as an allegory about the war: just as U.S. soldiers were betrayed in Vietnam, so too was Rambo betrayed by the CIA officer in charge of the mission. But abandonment by command was also liberation from the bureaucratic restraints imposed by command. Rambo unleashed subsequently destroyed the Vietnamese Army and rescued several American POWs.

Only war cures war: victory alone heals the scars of defeat and restores

Rambo III asserts that morality is on the side of the natives and that invaders—Russian or American—are morally wrong.

vitality to society. Historian Richard Slotkin says that the myth of "regeneration through violence" dates back to the first European-Indian land wars. Anglo technological and logistic superiority in warfare was seen by whites as a sign of their cultural and moral superiority. European and American "civilization" morally de-

served to defeat Indian "savagery." Each Anglo victory "regenerated" or reaffirmed the dominant social order and legitimated their treatment of the Indians.

The long history of unequivocal U.S. victories from the Indian wars through World War II reinforced the centrality of war and warriors as symbols of American power, masculine virility and virtue. War romances have been an influential popular genre from the dime novels of the late 19th century to the estimated 5,000 war movies made from World War II through the mid-'60s.

Several hundred Vietnam veterans have testified in their novels, memoirs and oral histories that they were influenced by the John Wayne, Audie Murphy and other war-hero movies. War movies have traditionally presented war as both desirable and relatively safe, a guaranteed ritual transition from boyhood to manhood.

Rambo's hit and myth: Defeat in Vietnam thus constituted a two-fold crisis for the U.S. First, defeat indicated severe limits to U.S. powers to successfully intervene in Third World countries. Second, defeat in Vietnam created a cultural crisis. Because American cultural traditions and personal identities are in part sustained and renewed through the myth of "regeneration through violence," defeat in Vietnam challenged that tradition.

How does *Rambo III* break from the genre? Besides Trautman's speech and the allusions to Westerns, *Rambo III*'s continual self-parody marks a real change. When Rambo rescues Trautman from the fort's dungeon and the bullets are whizzing by and Trautman says, "I'm sorry I got you into this, John," Rambo replies, "No you're not." Such corny one-liners constitute the film's entire dialogue.

The violence has reached such

outlandish proportions that it too becomes a parody. The National Coalition Against Television Violence notes that the movie has 123 killings, up from 44 in *Rambo II*, and overall has twice the violence. But the Coalition isn't looking at what it's counting. Toward the end Rambo and Trautman face several hundred Russians armed with tanks and helicopters. In the last ludicrous moments they are rescued by 10,000 Afghan (Indian) rebels on horseback, just like the cavalry riding to the rescue in the old Westerns. Rambo gets in a Russian tank and charges Col. Zaysan in his helicopter!

Such self-parody indicates that a primary myth is disintegrating; the disintegration opens a cultural space for articulating another vision and another story to encapsulate and symbolize the people's experience. This does not mean that the war romance is completely finished. Parody has complex cultural ramifications. Although *Rambo III*'s satire attacks the war romance in many ways, at another level the film acts as a "shield" for war culture. For example, at the annual conventions of *Soldier of Fortune* magazine in Las Vegas, conventioners routinely have decried the Rambo films as "unrealistic." By focusing on the outlandish features of Rambo films, conventioners could ignore their own seduction into the romance of the redeeming warrior hero. "Rambo" was always the other guy, as opposed to the hard-headed realist preparing for lethal confrontations with criminals, illegal aliens or terrorists.

In the same way, war novelists routinely have their characters deride war movies as bogus inversions of war. Tom Clancy, W.E.B. Griffin and other writers have sold millions of war romances in the '80s and new war novels in the established series continue to do well. The authors' debunking of the movie gives the male reader a sense of cultural superiority at the very moment he is seduced into tales of how ordinary men become warriors, share intimate fellowship with other elite warriors, save society from its many enemies, and win the love of a beautiful virgin/whore as their reward.

War romances promise fulfillment of needs unmet in everyday life—needs for power, prestige, passion, comradeship, adventure and a connection to a cause or meaning larger than oneself. The fantasy world of war is so large, contains so many variations and is so deeply rooted in American culture that it is not about to suddenly vanish. But *Rambo III* indicates that one very important warrior can't take the war path seriously any more as a way to meet those needs. As Trautman says to Rambo in the film's final scene, "I hate to admit it, John, but I think we're getting soft."

William Gibson is author of *The Perfect War: The War We Couldn't Lose and How We Did*. He is at work on a book about warrior fantasies and paramilitary culture.

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How to curb corruption at the Pentagon

by Rear Admiral Gene R. LaRocque (USN, Ret.)



"The American war of independence is over, but this is far from being the case with the American Revolution. On the contrary, nothing but the first act of the great drama is closed."

—Benjamin Rush, 1787

The current defense contracting scandal rocking the Pentagon is only the latest in a long line of such scandals, demonstrating that our current system must be changed if we are to finally bring an end to the endemic corruption of the military-industrial complex.

Ever since the first weapons contracts during the Revolutionary War, private corporations have been mired in waste and fraud scandals. After each scandal, Congress holds hearings, implements new regulations and reforms, and then the issue submerges for another several years.

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It is natural for Americans to rely for the production of weapons on the very institutions—private corporations—that have turned the United States into an economic powerhouse. Profits are usually justified in the marketplace. It is believed that...

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Brawley

Continued from page 7

of obnoxious black activists. There's little doubt that the trio present tempting media targets: Sharpton with his flowing mane and con-man mannerisms; Maddox and Mason with their penchant for hyperbole and hysteria. But the three still have a significant following and much success under their belts.

Mason is a graduate of Columbia University Law School and protege of long-time activist attorney William Kunstler. In a recent *Manhattan Lawyer* profile, Mason is said to have "helped redefine the practice of civil rights law in New York in the '80s."

Mason also defends his and Maddox's tactics of withholding his client's cooperation. "We had come to some of the points as we did in Howard Beach after...years and years of pleading and praying and begging and demonstrating and protesting and going to grand juries and meeting with officials and going on and on and on, with not even good lip service to the concept of equal justice," Mason is quoted as saying. "We have a sense of what it takes to successfully resolve some of these very, very heavy disputes."

Mason said the strategy of withholding cooperation is a legitimate legal model that "creates a powerful tool for crime victims" that prevents their testimony from being used "to give the seal of approval to the coverup." Their strategy has some academic support, according to the *Lawyer* article.

New breed of lawyer: Utrice Leid, editor of the *City Sun*, an audacious black Brooklyn-based weekly, says, "The issue is simply justice for Tawana Brawley. Everything else is superfluous, including the personality quirks of Al Sharpton." She contends the movement has divided itself by becoming preoccupied with petty squabbles and that many are underestimating Sharpton's organizing skills.

While she concedes that the Brawley advisers have handled public relations poorly and "employed a strategy that is obtuse, to say the least," she insists that people should be examining ways that they can be supportive rather than sniping at individuals involved in the movement for social justice.

Leid remains convinced that the Dutchess County authorities did not treat the Brawleys with justice and are involved in a coverup of some sort. But, she says, the fight is not for Tawana Brawley specifically, but for equal application of the law. "If she's lying, that'll be discovered," Leid says.

She argues that the public animus directed against the Brawleys' advisers is being fueled by the legal system's terror of lawyers like Mason and Maddox. "These new breed legal representatives, especially Maddox, play hardball and have absolutely no fear of white people. The legal system wants to crack people like them to serve as a message to all black lawyers that you buck the system at your own, considerable, expense," Leid theorizes. "They're both being set up to be indicted and then held up as examples of what the white legal system won't tolerate." □

Two-step

Continued from page 24

can't be solved?" shrugs another dancer. Mouthing the "new complacency," Martin grinds homeless bodies beneath her feet like so many steps on an escalator. "Buddy, if you don't want me to step on your house, get it off the sidewalk," she growls savagely. "I'm successful because I visualized it."

Martin herself, muscularly corporeal, exudes the sweaty vitality of movement connected to feeling. Her team of vulnerable toughs crisscross the space between pop-dance and theater, neurosis and self-love-therapy, supported by the mesmerizing saxophone of Lenny Pickett, or the sound of the Eurythmics.

Some beautiful solos, duets and springy, free-for-all ensemble dancing provide a physical release, as if exorcising half-truths makes these dancers free. They spin, walk quickly, kiss, clutch/cling, push each other

into the floor, swing, fling, gallop, collapse and awkwardly support or drag each other off stage in a comic inversion of effortless movement imagery.

But if self-mockery provides escape, despair and absurdity are never far from the surface of this self-centered, self-isolating universe. A dancer chides her suicidal friend to stop being a dancing heart and see hope in the unexpected. "Look at me," she says triumphantly. "I started out one night [at a party] trying to commit suicide [by popping pills] and I ended up [convulsing and acclaimed,] a post-modern dancer."

Both Martin and Irwin manage, with visual satire and a funky beat, to chip away at confining dance/theater conventions and expose repressed social/political content. This social depth is a refreshing antidote to ambiguous avoidance and the technical formalism that marks much post-modern dancing. ■

Diana Scott is a writer living in New Haven, Conn.

The New Alliance Party Progressive Politics or Opportunistic Scam?

There is a controversy surrounding the New Alliance Party (NAP); the related Social Therapy and Crisis Normalization centers which use techniques developed by Dr. Fred Newman; and the NAP's candidate for President, Dr. Lenora Fulani.

The issue seldom is discussed calmly or candidly.

The New Alliance Party describes itself as a Black-led, women-led, multi-racial, pro-gay, working class, independent political organization.

NAP's most outspoken critics call it an opportunistic political movement involving an unethical therapy cult whose white male guru, Newman, once

led his followers into an affiliation with neo-fascist homophobic cult leader Lyndon LaRouche.

A frank assessment of the NAP is long overdue. *Clouds Blur the Rainbow: The Other Side of the New Alliance Party*, by journalist and political activist Chip Berlet, provides a clear and comprehensive introduction to the debate on NAP.

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URGENT BUSINESS TO ATTEND TO? YOU MAY FIND IT FASTER TO REVERT TO CRAWLING IN SITUATIONS THAT REQUIRE GREAT HASTE.

WHEN TO WAKE UP
THE FUN BEGINS AT SUNRISE!!! MANY BIG PEOPLE DON'T UNDERSTAND THIS CONCEPT, SO BE SURE TO REMIND THEM EVERY DAY.

DROOLING MADE EASY
1. CLEAR MIND.
2. TILT HEAD FORWARD.
3. STARE BLANKLY.
4. SALIVATE.
5. PRESTO!

FRUSTRATED BECAUSE AN OBJECT DOESN'T WORK THE WAY YOU WANT IT TO?
NYAAA!
YELL AND HIT IT—JUST LIKE DADDY DOES.

SO YOU WANT TO BE AN ARTIST
VWA!
DID YOU KNOW YOU CAN MAKE YOUR OWN ART SUPPLIES? THAT'S RIGHT! JUST REACH IN YOUR DIAPERS AND SMEAR WHATEVER YOU FIND ALL OVER THE WALL. WOW!! YOU COULD BE AN AVANT-GARDE GENIUS!!!

YOUR DUTIES
1. BE CUTE.
2. SCREAM IF PROVOKED.
3. SCREAM IF IGNORED.
4. GRAB ANYTHING YOU CAN GET YOUR HANDS ON.
5. TASTE ANYTHING YOU CAN JAM IN YOUR MOUTH.
6. KEEP AN EYE ON MOMMY.

1001 FUN THINGS TO DO WITH FOOD
SQUEEZE IT, MASH IT, SMASH IT, SQUISH IT, SMERSH IT, SQUOOSH IT, SHMOOSH IT, GET RID OF IT.

VOCABULARY CORNER
YOU MAY FIND THAT THESE WORDS WILL COME IN HANDY FROM TIME TO TIME.
HI, UP, DOWN, BABY, DOGGY, WAWA, IN, OUT, GONE, NO, YUM, OUCH, BYE.

"THROW & FETCH"
PERHAPS THE BEST GAME EVER INVENTED
HOW TO PLAY
1. YOU THROW TOY.
2. MOMMY FETCHES.
3. REPEAT.
GAME IS OVER WHEN MOMMY GIVES YOU A COOKIE AND GOES TO LIE DOWN.

WARNING: THIS IS YOUR ONLY CHANCE IN LIFE TO LEGALLY RUN NAKED AND FREE, SO GO FOR IT.

...MYSTERIES OF YOUTH...
WHAT'S ON THE SHELF? WHERE DID MY GIFT GO?
WHAT'S ON THE TABLE?

THE post-modern TWO-STEP

By Diana Scott

WHEN NEW VAUDEVILLIAN BILL IRWIN was pursued on stage several years ago by a critic wielding a giant pencil ("In Regard of Flight"), his flight from prevailing definitions of art recalled minimalist choreographer Yvonne Rainer's mid-'60s challenge to mainstream modern dance. Rainer, and her avant-garde dance cohorts of "Grand Union," in their legendary performances at Judson Church, rejected almost everything that had come to characterize American modern dance, the personalized, non-balletic art form epitomized in the work of Martha Graham.

This meant saying "No," as Rainer did, to: spectacle, virtuosity, transformation, magic, make-believe, glamour, the star image, the heroic, the anti-heroic, trash imagery, involvement of performer or spectator, camp, seduction of spectator by the wiles of the performer, eccentricity, moving or being moved. Implicit in this "de-mystifying" rejection was disdain for commercial appeal, and the embrace of a democratized creative process. Yet the experiments of minimalists were overridingly apolitical; and they were consumed by a relatively small group of artists and intellectuals.

New York writ large: Bill Irwin's most recent work, *Largely/New York: Further Adventures of a Post-Modern Hooper*, takes on the state of post-modern dance circa 1988, and it's clear that times have changed since Rainer's manifesto. As dance critic Sally Banes has noted, a second wave of post-modernism (or is it post-modern neo-

modernism?!) is colored less by what it rejects than by the boundaries that it crosses. Much has been made, for example, of the cross-over of modern choreographers into ballet, where commissions are now being awarded for dances that borrow stylistically from both genres.

Less has been said, though, of re-emerging populist influences—including break-dancing and other popular entertainment forms—which have been liberated by the latest post-modern thaw. In espousal of these protean values—comedy, vernacular music, mimed gesture, episodic narrative, and a cartoonish shorthand for character development—the new vaudeville is converging with a vibrant strain of new, post-modern dance.

With his dusty top hat, cane and crumpled tails, Irwin's aging hooper is well-suited for his latest foray. Post-modern dancers of the '70s were cool technicians whose thick-soled sneakers fitted the rigors of an increasingly demanding, high-speed craft; many of their late-'80s successors have donned elegant top hats and tails. Thus, the hobo's upscale aspirations are as evident as his populist origins.

Conversely, the clown-punk look of post-modern choreographer Nina Martin's *Modern Daze*, seen recently at P.S. ("Performance Space") 122 on New York City's Lower East Side, emphasized other humble influences on this hybrid dance-theater tradition.

Jumbling genres: Performing uptown, at City Center, Irwin and his 20-member en-

semble used dance as dialect and attempted to learn each other's language. Their efforts were repeatedly frustrated by technological failure. Departing from earlier works, Irwin eschewed spoken text, letting distinct movement styles and gestures (break-dancing, "classical" modern, soft shoe and herd-ensemble) speak for themselves and create recognizable characters, more than situations.

There are a pair of break dancers who, when their boom-box fails, would rather quit than switch to "Tea for Two." There's also the remote, long-limbed modern soloist who, with her back to the audience and eye on the video monitor, performs Graham-like contractions with ballet-barre concentration to the fragmented rumble of a John Cage-like score. Then there's Irwin himself, unsteady, affable and indomitable, eager to put aside his old routines and learn a few new tricks.

He joins hands with the breakers and abdicates control as his arms become squared-off wave patterns transmitting segmented, popping rhythms. His heart shamelessly on his sleeve, he is pressed into service as the cool soloist's partner, stumbling to keep up, while she never misses a beat.

Against a chorus of dancers who double as lost, post-modern souls and a predatory horde of graduates, yesterday's hooper takes the spotlight with a transmitter-like remote control box. With child-like zeal he aims it at stage curtains (which rise, fall or do nothing); at audio-visual equipment (which responds or doesn't); at his pursuers

(who disperse and reappear).

Rather than extending his reach, however, technology almost proves his undoing: a surplus blip of the button finds him hoisted, leg first, to the rafters along with the curtain, his cam-corder dangling. Likewise, in a virtuosically coordinated struggle between hooper and VCR, the image of his face is trapped in the onstage video monitor, while his body struggles to pull free. In this contest between subject and simulacrum, a handy low-tech cleaner is the chosen tool of his would-be liberators.

Foreboding flip-side: But there's a flip-side to this funny and vulnerable post-modern pilgrimage, a sub-text that's more foreboding. The video-camera persistently brackets single, falling dancers, as they become mutely motionless; the chorus crowds around the monitor to see the aestheticized replay of this hush-hush epidemic.

In the final moments of *Largely/New York*, the raised proscenium curtain reveals a backstage littered with bodies—a bleak acknowledgement of the AIDS specter haunting the performing-arts community. Meanwhile, to a blast of catchy music, the solitary hooper repeats his circular warm-up jog.

In *Modern Daze*, Nina Martin and Madelein Olnick composed the spoken text that is a neat counterpart to Martin's resilient, athletic movement style. Building on an earlier style that combined the disjointed energy of break-dancing with a weightier, high-impact fluidity of improvised catch-and-tumble sports, the new, word-rich format has a more blunt-edged nerviness, laced with social irony.

Her earlier work, *Moving Violations*, seemed to pulsate like visual artist Keith Haring's early subway drawings (primitive, cookie-cutter shapes of animals, adults and babies with a halo of sunburst lines, for emphasis). The new work has more of the deadpan detail of comic strip captions or the manipulative suggestiveness of MTV ads. Interchangeable characters in shrill-colored punk dresses enact déjà-vu parables of daily life that dissolve into one another, dream-like, rather than resolve.

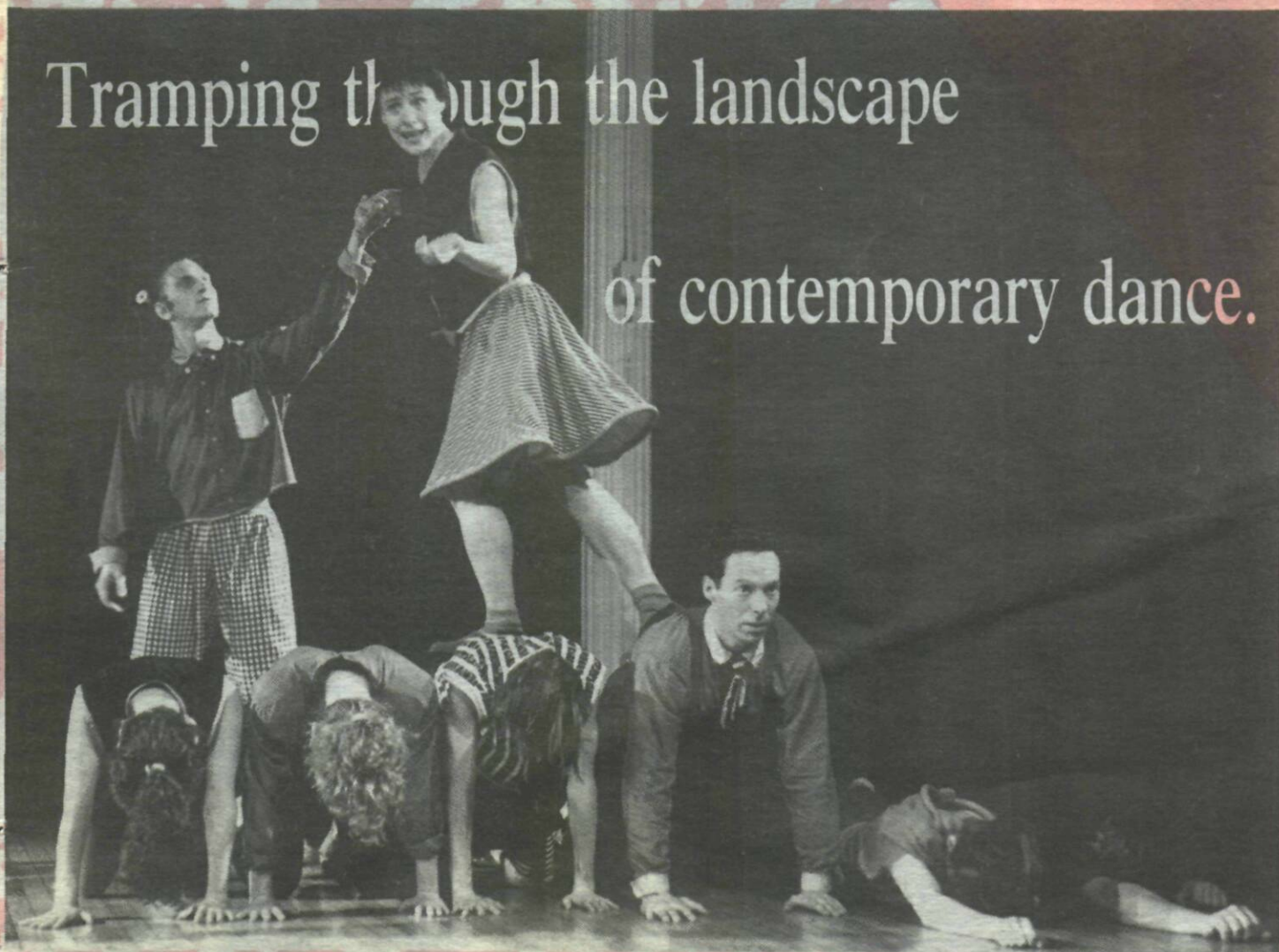
"Life is a rich, bountiful banquet, but are you like the family dog...eating crumbs off the table?" intones one dancer. The answer: reprogramming at the *Life Training Institute*. "You must learn to love and live for who? Yourself of course." Not doing so is like sitting at the table of life and saying "Pass the pain please."

"Join us now and start loving yourself today. [Aside:] All major credit cards accepted."

Self-love replaces social advocacy, seductively cancelling moral/ethical deliberations. "What's the point of spending your life putting a tiny little dent in a problem that

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Tramping through the landscape
of contemporary dance.



c. Donna Ann McAdams

Nina Martin trips the light fantastic on the backs of the homeless in *Modern Daze*.